A Journey in the World of the Tantras



Mark S.G. Dyczkowski

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Cover illustration: Svayaṁbhūnātha. Nepal, 17th century.

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The Goddess Kubjikā

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This book is dedicated to the memory
of my dear departed parents.

It is also offered as a gift of love
to Giovanna my wife
and to Tristan and Alice my children.

Abbreviations

ĀKā	Ādhārakārikā
APS	Ajaḍapramātṛsiddhi
BṛH	Bṛhadaraṇyakopaniṣad
BT	Buddhist Tantra
CGC	Cidgaganacandrikā
ChānUp	Chāndogyopaniṣad
CMSS	Ciñcinīmatasārasamuccaya
CSS	Candra Saṁśer Collection
GS	Gorakṣasaṁhitā
HT	Hevajratantra
ĪP	Īśvarapratyabhijnākārikā
JY	Jayadrathayāmala
KK	Kulakrīḍāvatāra
KMT	Kubjikāmatatantra
KnT	Kubjikānityāhnikatilaka
KrSB	Kramasadbhāva
KRU	Kularatnoddyota
KSTS	Kashmiri Series of Texts and Studies
KuKh	Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the Manthānabhairavatantra
KY	Kṛṣṇayāmala
LĀS	Luptāgamasaṁgraha
LT	Lakṣmītantra
MBT	Manthānabhairavatantra
MM	Mahārthamañjarī
MNP	Mahānayaprakāśa by Arṇasiṁha
MP	Mahānayaprakāśa by Śitikaṇṭha
MS	Manuscript
MV	Mālinīvijayottaratantra
NAK	National Archives Kathmandu
NCC	New Catalogus Catalogorum
NGMPP	Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project

NP	Nareśvaraparīkṣā
NS	Niśisaṁcāratantra
NṢA	Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava
NTu	Netratantroddyota
PL	Palm-leaf manuscript
PrHṛ	Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya
PS	Paramārthasāra
PTv	Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa
ṢaṭSS	Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā
ŚB	Śatapathabrahmaṇa
ŚDṛ	Śivadṛṣṭi
SKh	Siddhakhaṇḍa of the Manthānabhairavatantra
ŚM	Śrīmatottaratantra
SP	Saṁvitprakāśa
SpKā	Spandakārikā
SpKāvi	Spandakārikāvivṛti
SpKāvṛ	Spandakārikāvṛti
SpNir	Spandanirṇaya
SpPra	Spandapradīpikā
SpSam	Spandasaṁdoha
SŚP	Somaśambhupaddhati
ŚSt	Śivastotrāvali
ŚSū	Śivasūtra
ŚSūvā	Śivasūtravārtikā
ŚSūvi	Śivasūtravimarśinī
Sū	Sūtra
SvT	Svacchandabhairavatantra
TĀ	Tantrāloka
TāSā	Tāntrika Sāhitya
TS	Tantrasadbhāva
VB	Vijnānabhairava
VP	Vākyapadīya
YKh (1) & (2)	Yogakhaṇḍa of the Manthānabhairavatantra (first and second recensions)
YHṛ	Yoginīhṛdaya
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

INTRODUCTION

This book is a collection of essays, the first of which was published in 1986 and the last in 2001. They are, for the most part, presented in chronological order and so document in their own way my personal journey through parts of the Śaiva and, to some extent, the Vaiṣṇava Tantras. Anyone who has travelled on similar paths knows how vast and marvellous the lands of this extraordinary world are. Like a pilgrim travelling barefoot carrying nothing but a staff and provisions for the journey, like many other fellow travellers of the past and present, I have been guided and inspired by the wonder of this world. Puting my trust in the principle that "all things are by nature everything" (*sarvaṁ sarvātmakam*), my hope is that the deities of the few sacred sites I have managed to visit will grace me with a glimpse of the All, too vast to grasp except in its individual manifestations.

The past thirty years have witnessed an immense growth in the numbers of my fellow pilgrims. Each one of us, without distinction of birth or culture, has been graced. But even as we have been illumined we have been led to contemplate increasingly vaster expanses of the Unknown.

Self-awareness, Own Being and Egoity

The first three essays were the result of research into the development of Kashmiri Śaivism, which was required for the work I was engaged in on the Spanda school. The first of these is a brief historical study of what can be said to be the hallmark of Kashmiri Śaivism. This is the notion that the one, unique reality — which is equally Śiva, the Self and all that appears and exists in any form — is pure, universal 'I' consciousness (*ahaṁbhāva*).

Although the Upaniṣads had already proclaimed the oneness of the Self — Ātman — and the Absolute — Brahman — centuries before, the formulation of this fundamental identity in this way is truly unique in the history of Indian thought. Patañjali teaches in his *Yogasūtra* that the highest, most subtle object of concentration is the sense of 'I-ness' (*asmitā*). But in the ultimate liberated state this gives way to the pure consciousness of the Self (*puruṣa*). The Buddhist Anuttarayoga Tantras teach forms of what has been termed 'deity Yoga', in which the aspirant develops the 'divine pride' (*divyagarva*) of being the deity. But this too must ultimately give way to the ineffable experience of Voidness; that is, the realisation of the dependent origination of all things and hence their lack of independent existence. The Upaniṣads teach that the Self is the 'knower' who 'sees' and 'perceives' but, according to Śaṅkara at least, it is such only in relation to a provisional object of knowledge. The latter appears to have an independent existence only as long as the individual perceiver has not realised his true identity with the one absolute Brahman which can have no outer or inner relationship with any other reality. Once the true nature of the Self is realised to be the absolute Brahman which is 'one without a second', this subjectivity is abandoned. In all these cases the ego is given a positive valency, but only insofar as it serves as means to the realisation which ultimately annuls it. For the same reason Śaṅkara insists that the Brahman is not a personal creator God. There can be no real world that the Brahman may create, just as there can be no object in relation to which the Brahman may be a subject. Just as the Brahman does not create, the Self does not perceive. The Self-cum-Brahman is simply the reality behind illusory creation and perceptions.

Although Kashmiri Śaivism agrees with Advaita Vedānta that the Self is the one absolute reality, it neither denies the reality of the world nor the ultimate, absolute status of the one God. In the first stages of the development of the monistic metaphysics developed by the Kashmiri masters in the 10th century, it was essentially a dynamic pantheism. Reality is a 'process-less process'. It is a process which, in the temporal terms of its individual manifestations, is a perpetual succession of creation and destruction. In terms of its own essential nature, and that of its manifestations, it maintains its own

ineffable identity, unchanged and untouched by time and space. As Abhinavagupta puts it "the principle of consciousness, very pure, is beyond talk of succession and its absence".[1] The Buddhists also espouse a process theory of reality, but they come to the conclusion that the manifest world generated and sustained through, and as, this process is illusory, which the Kashmiri Śaiva schools do not. The earlier ones, the Spanda and the Kālīkrama along with the budding Pratyabhijñā represented by the *Śivadṛṣṭi* of Somānanda, accepted this paradox as it stands. The bipolar unitary consciousness engaged in this process spontaneously forms itself into all the polarities that sustain the business of daily life (*vyavahāra*) including subject and object, cause and effect, continuity and change, transcendence and immanence, the one who graces (*anugrahitṛ*) and the one who is graced (*anugrahya*).

At this early stage in the development of Kashmiri Śaivism, the contradictions inherent in this 'idealistic realism' are resolved *a priori* by the axiomatic postulate that the one reality is a 'union of opposites'; the prime one, from which all the others are derived, being Śiva and his divine power. This view, common to all the *śāstric* theistic traditions of India, is here coupled with an uncompromising monism which allows for the continued integrity of the male polarity — that of the power-holder — even as the female polarity — that of his power — ebbs and flows in consonace with the rythmn of constantly renewed manifestation. And this manifestation is never anything but that of Śiva himself.

About the middle or second half of the ninth century, Somānanda developed this view, applying it systematically to the resolution of the cardinal problems with which philosophers and theologians are concerned and engaging vigorously in reasoned argument against its possible opponents. Śiva is Śiva because he is free in every respect to act and to know by virtue of the omnipotent power of his will. By virtue of his power of action, Śiva is an agent. As such he is the cause of all things, insofar as effects are the products of the activity of the agent. Similarly, Śiva is a 'knower' by virtue of his power of knowledge which allows him to know the object he has generated himself into.

[1] *kramākramātītaṁ saṁvittattvaṁ sunirmalam* | TĀ 4/180ab.

At this point Utpaladeva, Somānanda's devoted disciple, intervenes to open up what he rightly calls a 'new path' by developing his philosophy to its ultimate conclusion. But to do this he had to depart from the substance model of consciousness. Although everybody agrees, of course, that consciousness is insubstantial, it nonetheless retained many properties of a substance. The relationship between Śiva and Śakti can be understood as one between substance and its essential attributes. As the foundation of manifestation, it is like the formless clay in relation to the objects fashioned from it, or the screen upon which the cosmic picture is projected. The analogy is particularly pertinent when consciousness is understood, as it is by the Advaita Vedānta, to be devoid of cognitive activity. A pure lucid awareness devoid of objectivity is like a 'pure' substance devoid of attributes. Indeed, Abhinavagupta would say that it is so much like a substance that its conscious nature is negated. While Śaṅkara boasts of his perfectly inactive Brahman, these monists denounce it as being inert and powerless, like a stone. This is why the Spanda and Krama schools, along with Somānanda, posit the ultimate existence of a *cognative* consciousness which generates itself into the world and its individual perceivers. From the perspective of these three schools, it expands out to its object and retracts from it, passes through the phases of perception and flows with the current of its cognative and conative energies, respectively. However, the substance model has not been fully abandoned even though consciousness is fluid — it pulses, heaves and flows, like an expanding and contracting gas, waves, or streams of water.

Utpaladeva adopts a new, more satisfactory model. Cognative consciousness is like light. It illumines even as it lights itself up. The physical body, cognative apparatus, concepts, cognitions, objects, all that appears in any form is the shining of this divine Light. This is Śiva. His powers to will, know and act, already extensively described by Somānanda, fuse into the one power of reflective awareness. This is the awareness that consciousness has of its own nature — by virtue of which it is a subject — and of its contents, by virtue of which it is the object. This is Śakti. The interplay between these two polarities is the one universal, absolute I-ness.

This, according to Abhinavagupta, is the highest, subtlest view of reality which, although never directly articulated in the Tantras,

must be, nonetheless, implicitly accepted by them if Tantric rituals and Yoga are to be effective. Thus he makes use of this insight as a golden hermeneutical key to unlock the innermost meaning of the Tantric traditions he examines. He applied his hermeneutic so thoroughly that Utpaladeva's brilliant and unique contribution could only be noticed when the time was ripe for a detailed analysis of early Kashmiri Śaiva monism, and access was achieved to what remains of Abhinavagupta's scriptural sources.

Abhāvavāda, the Doctrine of Non-being

This short excursion into an obscure doctrine espoused by several Śaiva schools appeared to me in the early eighties to be particularly rare and unusual. According to this view, Śiva, who is inherently beyond characterization, is characterized as Non-being. But further research has revealed that, although not very common, this 'positive apophansis' is not as rare as it seems.

A major area of research, as yet hardly touched, are the various concepts of Emptiness taught first in the early Upaniṣads, and subsequently in the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Tantras and the later so-called Yoga Upaniṣads. The interplay between the formless transcendent reality — the deity beyond time and space — and the manifold forms generated within it through its own inherent power is a major recurrent paradigm represented in a vast number of ways. Remeniscent of the early identifications of the Brahman with Space, the image carries over into the Tantras where this transcendental emptiness is the Sky (variously called *vyoman*, *kha*, or *ākāśa*). Despite the logical contradictions, which cannot anyway affect it, the supreme Void is located, as it were, at the end of a long series of lower more 'concrete' principles. The Siddhānta reserves this level for the Śiva principle. Similarly the Kaula Tantras of the Kubjikā school praise Bhairava, the wrathful form of Śiva, as the Void which, although above all things and supremely vacuous, is the foundation that sustains all things:

I praise that Bhairava who is eternal bliss, supreme, tranquil, formless (*niṣkala*), free of defects; beyond the firmament he is the supreme Void. Superior to the supreme, tranquil, pure, extremely pure, I praise that Bhairava who sustains the whole universe.[2]

[2] ŚM 1/26cd-28ab.

Although Bhairava is all things (*viśvarūpa*) he is 'more void than the Void'.[3] We may define this characterization of the transcendent as so strongly apophatic that in phenomenal terms it is even more than the 'nothing' we experience as the absence of something. Supremely passive and transcendent, and yet attainable by Yoga and even ritual because this Non-being is not a pure antithesis of Being, it is its transcendental aspect. Experienced directly in the most elevated state of consciousness of the deity, it is not amenable to the binary dichotomy of reason:

"Free of mind and beyond mind, devoid of being and non-being, free of merger and verbalization, devoid of logical cause and reason, what is to be abandoned and instrumental means, scripture (*śruti*) and example, it is endowed with the condition of non-being (*nāstikya-bhāva*). It is the Void free of defects, the transcendent lord of all causes (*karaṇeśvara*), beyond the senses and speech; (the wise) know it to be the Supreme Sky. The means to its (attainment) is all this path of Yoga and ritual."[4]

Alongside this passive transcendent there is a dynamic one. Non-being is the active, creative source of Being. In the Void of transcendental consciousness — Non-being — we experience the plenitude of manifestation — phenomenal Being. The *Triśiro-bhairava,* an important Tantra of the Trika school, explains that the Void of Consciousness (*cidvyoman*) is the final and supreme plane beyond the gross, elemental vacuum. It is the Void of Śiva which is the supreme state, Non-being which is the pulse of the experience of Being.[5]

The Kubjikā tradition teaches that the Divine Current of the energy of the supramental energy of consciousness courses through the Void of Non-being. The energies of this flux are aspects of the contemplation of Non-being that leads to the Transmental through which the Yogi becomes one with the supreme deity, his authentic and innate nature. As the *Manthānabhairava Tantra* teaches: "One should

[3] ibid. *śūnyāc chūnyataraṁ śūnyaṁ bhairavaṁ taṁ namāmy aham* | 1/32ab

[4] KMT 19/90-93ab.

[5] *bhūtavyomapadātītaṁ cidvyomāntapadaṁ paraṁ |*
bhāvapratyayasaṁrambham abhāvaṁ paramā gatiḥ |
śivavyoma tu tat jñeyaṁ | Comm. on TĀ 3/137cd-141ab

constantly contemplate Non-being. (This) is the teaching concerning the arising of one's own nature." [6]

Similarly, Kālīkrama sources teach that the spheres of the five-fold flux (*pañcavāha*) of consciousness — transcendental, mental, sensorial, biophysical and objective —flow through Non-being. Thus what the Kālīkrama characterizes as five spheres of emptiness unfold perpetually in the Great Void of Non-being. Praising the goddess Kālī who is all this, the Tantra exclaims: "Salutation to you who are the Non-being of all things".[7] Kālī is Bhairavī — Bhairava's consort — whose form is fierce and is established in the essential nature of Non-being.[8]

Apart from these essentially mystical formulations, occasionally found in many of the major early Śaiva Tantric traditions in which Śiva is worshipped in his fierce form as Bhairava and the goddess in hers, 'non-being' is also an important logical category. Any entity can be said to be the postive correlate of the non-existence of everything else. This is not idle sophistry. Each thing is specifically itself because it is not anything else. Absence or 'non-being' is thus an extensive subject of philosophical enquiry. For the philosophers of the Kashmiri Śaiva tradition, it is also a way of establishing the existence of the Self as pure substratum consciousness which must necessarily exist to explain our daily experience. How is that? If we reflect on what we mean by the absence or non-existence of an entity, we find that it coincides with a perception of a place or sustaining ground devoid of that entity. If we divest ourselves of all thoughts, recollections, feelings, perceptions and the like, what must remain is their underlying ground — the 'place' where they are absent — that is, the substratum consciousness. The same reasoning holds good for the entire cosmic order. Its 'non-being' is the non-finite ground of its existence, that is, Deity.

Saṁvitprakāśa, the Light of Consciousness

This essay is an adaptation of the introduction to my edition of the *Saṁvitprakāśa* by Vāmanadatta published in 1990. I had noticed

[6] KuKh 57/29cd.

[7] *bhāvābhāvavirāmānte sarvābhāve namo 'stu te* | KrSB 2/15cd.

[8] *niḥsvabhāvasvabhāvasthā bhairavyā ghoravigrahā* | KrSB 2/15cd.

a manuscript of this text in the handlist of the manuscript collection of the government research centre in Srinagar, Kashmir, in 1976. A few years later I noticed a second one in the Central Library of Banaras Hindu University, where several interesting Kashmiri manuscripts have been preserved. In the mid-eighties Prof. Gnoli was kind enough to give me a copy of the Srinagar manuscript. At that time I was preparing the *Stanzas on Vibration*, an annotated translation of the untranslated commentaries of the *Spandakārikā*. Amongst them was a commentary by Bhagavadutpala, also called Utpala Vaiṣṇava. A convert to Kashmiri Śaivism, he chose to include references from several Vaiṣṇava sources in his commentary to establish, no doubt, that they were essentially compatible, whilst reserving the place of honour to monistic Śaivism.

A fellow Vaiṣṇava with strong Śaivite influences, Vāmanadatta is an important source for Bhagavadutpala. The latter quotes Utpaladeva and so was acquainted with the phenomenology of the Pratyabhijñā, but it is quite possible that Vāmanadatta was not. Important key terms, basic to the Pratyabhijñā, are missing, such as the central concept of universal I-ness. Nonetheless, Vāmanadatta's position is very close to that of Utpaladeva. Consciousness is luminous. It shines as all things. The radiance of this Light is the interplay between subject and object. It is dynamic. But while Pratyabhijñā terms are missing, a key term drawn from the Kālīkrama is so prominent that it appears in the title of the work, namely, *saṁvit*. This is one of several words in Sanskrit for consciousness. It is highly significant that Vāmanadatta should chose this one, for although it is a common term for consciousness in Kashmiri Śaivite circles, it is rare elsewhere. Even so, it appears frequently in the Tantric sources of the Kālīkrama, including the *Jayadrathayāmala*, its earliest extensive source. There the main deity is the goddess Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī, a form of Kālī, who is identified with *saṁvit* which is, appropriately, a feminine noun. The *Jayadrathayāmala* is also unusual because it outlines, here and there and in simple terms, an idealism based on an identity of subject and object explicitly stated in those terms. We know that Vāmanadatta was well acquainted with the Kālīkrama from references he himself makes in his work. Moreover, a certain Vāmana appears as the second teacher in the lineage of the Kālīkrama founded

in Kashmir by Śivānanda (also called Jñānanetra).[9]

Thus, this Vāmana belonged to the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century and so either preceeded or was an older contemporary of Utpaladeva. If this is the same Vāmana, his system tells us a great deal about the development of Kashmiri Śaivism. But even if our Vāmanadatta is not so early, there can be little doubt that his idealism and phenomenology is inspired largely by the Kashmiri Kālīkrama. The degree to which it has inspired Utpaladeva remains an interesting point of debate. Another fertile field of research is the peculair relationship between Vaiṣṇavism and the Kālīkrama. The *Jayadrathayāmala* and related early Kālīkrama sources present interesting forms of Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu's spouse, worshipped in the centre of a circle of Kālīs. As the energy of Viṣṇu (*vaiṣṇavīśakti*), Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī is the spouse of Narasiṁha, a fierce (and carnivorous!) form of Viṣṇu.

The Inner Pilgrimage of the Tantras

Although this study is based on textual sources, nonetheless it is as much concerned with the world 'outside' as the 'inner' one of the Tantric scriptures. A point of contact between these two domains is sacred geography. Many concerns are addressed when we talk about sacred geography. It is a way in which human beings take possession of place. Through it they find their home not only in the human world but also with the deities to whom sacred places ultimately belong.

[9] Then I bow at all times to the best of teachers, the venerable Śivānandanātha who possesses the eye of great transcendental wisdom (*mahājñāna*).

I reverence with devotion the venerable *Keyuravatī* who has grasped all the wisdom born of the sacred seat and wonders in the Wheel of Emptiness.

I salute the venerable one called *Vāmana*, the best of great heroes (*mahāvīra*) who, ever established in the abode of the goddess, is the sun (that illumines the) Tradition (*krama*).

tataḥ śrīmac chivānandanāthaguruvaraṁ sadā |
lokottaramahājñānacakṣuṣaṁ praṇamāmy aham ||
śrīmatkeyūravatyākhyā [keryukhatyā] pīṭhajajñānapāragā |
khacakracāriṇī yeyaṁ tām ahaṁ naumi bhaktitaḥ ||
mahāvīravaro yo 'sau śrīmadvāmanasaṁjñakaḥ |
devīdhāmni sadārūḍhas taṁ vande kramabhāskaram ||

The *Mahānayaprakāśa* by Arṇasiṁha, verses 153 to 155.

Here men live with them and their ancestors. Here they acquire the power of sacred places — that same power the sacred beings who reside there possess. Here we return to those places sanctified by the transmission of sacred knowledge to participate again in their power. Established at the beginning of time by the presence of deity and perfected men and women who, descending from the limitless expanse that is their original home into the world of men, form a bridge to its unconditioned and eternal power.

Sacred geography is as much human as it is divine. It is more than physical, social or cultural geography. It is the geography of the land in which we live. It is not just space or places, it is our home. Places locate us. They personalize the landscape, transforming it into a familiar place where we are free of the fear of the unknown. It becomes a place where we belong and which belongs to us, recovered from the anonimous expanse or from those who had been there before us. From as far back as man trod the earth conscious of himself and his surroundings, he needed to know at least in which direction he was travelling. First a nomad, the ancient Indian roamed the face of the earth invoking the deities not of place, but of direction. Wherever he went he would call them to offer them what he could and receive from them sustenance, offspring, vigour, power, and all the good things of the world in which he moved. He called his gods from their distant homes in the sky, the wind, the fire, the waters, in the dawn, in the rivers, in all the limitless and sacred landscape that enveloped him and through which he moved with his kin and comrades. He carried with him the sacred fire with which he cooked his food and that of the gods, the fire which, wherever it was placed, became his home and shelter. In this fire he made his offerings, the same fire with which he cooked his food and was, in his ever changing world, the centre where he found nourishment and life-sustaining warmth.

Then, with the passage of time, his life became more sedentary and he delighted in a land in which he lived where the rivers and the clouds where like fat milch cows, flowing with nourishing milk.[10]

[10] I do not wish to enter into the controversy concerning the original home of the so-called Indo-europeans. There can be no doubt that the Vedas were entirely revealed in India. Moreover, they contain no memory of some earlier period outside India. The theory that the Indo-european ancestors of the Vedic

Here he communicated with the gods, offering them rich sacrifices, lengthy and full of invocations, praise and thanksgiving. Here he could take time to make his petitions and prepare the offerings. But he never lost his urge to wonder and so, with time, the nomad became a pilgrim.

Pilgrimage is a rich and varied human phenomenon. It is man's response to the sacredness of places where theophanies — astonishing manifestations of the divine — occur. Necessarily linked to places, they are creative events that originally took place, as Eliade would say, in *illo tempore*, at the 'beginning of time', and in those places where gods, mountains, rivers, sacred trees, everything of importance — indeed, even the entire universe — originated. Sacred sites not only commemorate the origins of things, they are also powerful markers of place. In the barren landscape of the Australian desert, they orientate the aboriginal. In crowded urban space they transform it into a living *maṇḍala* populated by the beings of its sacred sites and the mortals who live and move amongst them. The guardians of place came to be guardians of the home, the village, the neighbourhood, town, city, state and, ultimately, the entire country, regardless of the boundaries of human settlements.

It is not surprising therefore that the first reference we find in the Sanskrit sources to sacred place and its natural human response — pilgrimage — occurs with the founding of the protoype of the first Aryan state. This took place in the early post-ṛgvedic period praised as the golden age of the Kurus under their king Parikṣit, the ancestor of the well-known Janameya Pārikṣita of Brāhmaṇa and Mahābhārata fame and of the Pārikṣita dynasty of the Kurus. Momentous developments took place in the Vedic culture of the period, including the arrangement of the Vedas in the form we have

peoples came from outside India is by no means as easy to establish as many history books assume. Elements of Vedic sacrifice — such as the mobility of the sacred fire — do suggest that the Vedic people were at some time nomadic, but this does not at all imply, yet alone prove, that they were not native Indians. The reader is referred to Bryant (2001) for a concise, unbiased presentation of the major theories. While he shyes away from reaching any ultimate conclusion, his study does demonstrate that the 'Aryan invasion' theory is far from being evidently the best one.

today. The centre of political power and Vedic culture became Kurukṣetra — the Land of the Kurus. This was the favoured land of the Vedic gods, who flocked to the many sacrifices performed there in their honour. It is in Kurukṣetra that the heavenly river Sarasvatī — the Milky Way — was regarded as flowing down from heaven about the time of the winter solistice. The ritual texts make the Sarasvatī and her companion the Dṛśadvatī the place of long treks — the first recorded pilgrimages — along her banks to the point where they flowed down from the now-opened door of heaven in the north-east.[11]

By the middle of the first millenium of the current era the first Tantras are being redacted at a time when other post-Vedic sources regularly refer to numerous *kṣetras* — 'sacred lands' — and 'river fords' — *tīrthas* — by which to cross over to heavenly realms. The sources we examine in this essay are typical of a new order of highly literate Tantric cults that emerged from the eighth century onwards. These, like the earlier Tantric cults and Śaiva sects from which they evolved, focused on the figure of the roaming ascetic. But now the places he has to travel to are much increased in number. Moreover, they are no longer just simply called 'sacred lands' — *kṣetras* — they are specific seats — *pīṭhas* — of deities and meeting grounds for male initiates and Yoginīs, their female counterparts. The development of the sacred geography of India we witness in these sources is paralleled by that of their public, exoteric counterparts — the Purāṇas. Influencing each other, the latter came to serve as the register and scriptural authority for a vast expansion both of the number of sacred sites as well as the detailed development of the sacred geography of each place.

Inevitably, the original culture of peripatetic renouncers had to adapt to the needs of initiated householders and cloistered monks, bringing about the rapid interiorization of sacred sites and pilgrimage. This process, along with the cataclysmic effects of the Muslim incursions into India and the posterior conquest, left the scriptural *imprimatur* that recorded and sanctioned the history of the development of the sacred geography of the country largely in the hands of the redactors of the Purāṇas. The powerful Muslim presence, with the loss of patronage that this entailed, coupled with their active

[2] Witzel 1995: 15-16.

widescale destruction of temples, brought about the end of extensive religious foundations. Thus Buddhism with its network of large monastic institutions died out, as did the original Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava monasteries that were their Hindu counterpart. Wherever this took place Hindu religious culture, fighting for survival, centred itself again, as it had done in earlier times, on small local and domestic cults that could be managed with relatively modest individual and public support. Monumental temples and monasteries were replaced by no less grand, detailed and extensive sacred geographies which integrated the myriads of local cults, great and small, into robust networks that could elude and resist the Muslim determination to conversion. So, although the earlier Tantric traditions had largely been truncated, in the parts of India where these changes took place, Tantric deities, sites and rituals proliferated once more and for the same reasons as before and the same public need — protection, personal and political power. But now the enemy was no longer within and the destruction wrought was more terrible. So the deities of the Tantras appeared in huge numbers in the public domain and mingled there with the divine forms already there. Each was alloted a place, and the magnitude of their sacrality and power was no longer measured by the size of the modest temples, shrines and domestic altars they inhabited, but by the power of place from which they drew their energy first and to which they returned it, strengthened. In this way the countless millions of gods and goddesses of India could work together, co-ordinated by the network of sacred sites that covered every corner, great and small, of the vast land of Bhārata.

Kubjikā, the Androgynous Goddess and The Cult of the Goddess Kubjikā

My first contact with the goddess Kubjikā was in 1981. That was the year I got married, and I received as a wedding present from my friend and preceptor Alexis Sanderson a copy of a manuscript of the *Kubjikāmatatantra*. At that time I was still deeply involved in Kashmiri Śaivism, but the seed had been sown. In the following years I made regular trips to the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, as I still continue to do. There I found manuscripts of many more Tantras that came originally from India and liturgies dedicated to the goddess

Kubjikā, although she is now virtually unknown in her country of origin. It seemed also that she was no longer worshipped in the Valley either. There are no temples to her or other outer signs of her presence. Nonetheless, I continued to make enquiries until, in 1987, someone found the courage to tell me that he had taken initiation into her cult. This led to the discovery that the Newars, the original inhabitants of the Valley, true to their strong Tantric inclinations, practice a surprising number of secret Tantric cults, both Buddhist and Śaiva. Focusing my attention on the Śaiva cults, I was astonished to discover the existence of a 'secret society' several centuries old.

It is common practice amongst South Asian Hindus in general to have a family deity (*kuladevatā*), although it is often relatively neglected. But for Śaiva Newars their family deities are the prime focus of their religious concerns. Moreover, these deities are all Kaula goddesses whose cults died out in the rest of the subcontinent centuries ago. Admitting, as such cults did when they were still practiced elsewhere, numerous local and regional variations, the manner they are worshipped is distinctly Newar. But even so, they clearly retain their original Tantric character and present an interesting picture of how they may have been practiced in the past elsewhere. Similarly, Newar society is of great interest not only to the anthropologist and sociologist, but also, and in a special way, to the student of Tantra. Families, joint and extended, are the fibres of caste, and castes the threads of the fabric of all traditional Hindu societies. In this case, the colour and patterns of the weave are those of the secret, Tantric lineage deities configured spontaneously by the economy of the social order. In short, we find here a unique example of what may have once been a relatively common phenomenon in South Asia, namely, a Tantric society.

At the same time, despite the substantial Buddhist presence, Newar society is still largely configured as is a traditional Hindu one. This is especially true of Bhaktapur, which is almost entirely populated by Newars. A large town of about 20,000 people, it retains the social topography of a medieval capital of a South Asian kingdom. In the ideal centre is the palace of the king, around which is the centre of the town where the higher castes reside, to which the families of the king's priest (*purohita*) and ministers belong. Next come

the craftsmen and farmers, and finally, in the outermost circle on the borders of the town, the sweepers and the other low 'unclean' castes. To all of these people, except the last, access is allowed to the secret Tantric cults. The nuclear castes worship the secret Kaula goddesses directly as their family deities, and their attendants those of the second circle. Served by their priests (which amongst the Newars are not necessarily always Brahmins) in conformity with the usual *jajmāni* system prevalent in South Asia, the initiates also benefit through them from the esoteric Kaula Tantric rites in addition to the usual exoteric ones, both familial — the rites of passage — and public — temple and festive rituals. The chief priest, from which the other priests ultimately derive their authority, is the king's family priest. These two figures — the royal client (*yajamāna*) and his family priest (*purohita*) — have been locked together in a relationship of mutual dependence, spiritual and material, for centuries before the advent of Tantra. The latter deepened this relationship even further, strengthening it with the double bond and power of both the earlier Vedic related *smārta* and the later Tantric initiatory modalities.

In accord with common practice, the king's deity is that of his country and people. With two faces, the inner secret goddess and the outer public god, the king's deity transmits its energy and grace both in the outer domain and through the network of esoteric familial goddesses who, energies in their own right, are thereby inwardly charged. Thus the king, his goddess and his priest together are the axis of this inner secret society. But there is one more even deeper level and that is the innermost secret unknown even to the king: the goddess of his priest. Here we reach the source of the chain of transmission. Secretly — for secrecy fosters and sustains inner power — the king's priest connects his goddess to that of the king. Month after month, year after year for centuries he has faithfully served his lord by reestablishing time and again the link between their two goddesses.

This is the strange and wonderful vortex of power into which I was suddenly plunged when all those years ago I stumbled upon the goddess Kubjikā. Or did she seek me out? Kubjikā is the priest's goddess. She is the goddess of creation, and so is relatively mild and erotic. The king's goddess is Siddhalakṣmī, a form of Kālī — the goddess of destruction. Her name — Accomplished Royalty (or

Wealth) — reminds us that she destroys her opposite, impotence and poverty. Her awesome ferocity imparts to her royal devotee the power he needs to be king while she draws energy from the emanation of the energy of creation of the goddess Kubjikā, from which the king and his goddess ultimately derive their authority. So while the king's goddess devours and consumes his enemies, material and spiritual, the priest's goddess nourishes and replenishes.

But since the Malla kings lost their thrones to the Gorkha king Prthivi Narayan Shah, who invaded the Kathmandu Valley in the 17th century, the performance and power of the secret rituals of the Malla kings have steadily declined, and with them those of their Newar subjects. The necessary patronage, once abundant, which allowed initiates to maintain the extensive ritual activity their complex secret cults require, has progressively been withdrawn. The modern world, which proposes other goals and means to their attainment, has accelerated this process. Hardly anybody of the new generation is drawn to take the initiation which burdens them with many obligations and promises, it seems, no rewards. We may soon witness the final fatal blow at the hands of insurgent Communism, which everywhere has been inclement to all religions. The Goddess, in her many secret manifestations, is dying. Hidden in the family temples and prayer rooms of her devotees, her manifestations are quietly breathing their last.

But now, providentially, the outside world has been allowed access to that secret world as never before. The huge libraries of largely Tantric manuscripts collected over the centuries by the Newar kings were first transferred to the libraries of the Rāṇas, the prime ministers of the Shah kings, and then to the state archives. These, along with many manuscripts piously preserved for centuries by the families of former ministers and common initiates, have been photographed in the past thirty years in the course of a vast manuscript preservation project financed by the German government in collaboration with the Nepalese.

These years have witnessed dramatic developments in the study of Āgamic Śaivism in general. Progress has been made on several fronts. On the one hand there has been a substantial increase in the historical and anthropological data. On the other, access has been

cleared in this way to vast reserves of unedited and unpublished sources, which have greatly swelled the numbers of those to which we had access previously. But as yet not much has been done to bridge the gap between these two dimensions, the doctrinal and its application. Indeed, the gap, one could say duality, between them has been widened by the increasingly complex theories and reflections that have developed in these and preceeding decades. Scholars, attempting to understand the immense amount of data available to them, surveying the history of the religions of South Asia and the present situation, commonly analyse it in terms of an interaction between two traditions. These have been variously defined, for example, as 'Aryan' and 'non-Aryan', 'Sanskritic' and 'non-Sanskritic', 'Vedic' and 'non-Vedic', 'Brahminic' and 'Śramanic', 'urban' and 'rural', 'literate' and 'non-literate', 'textual' and 'oral'. One could add considerably to the list of characterizations of these presumed polarities, a fact which in itself eloquently testifies to the uncertainty in which they are shrouded.

To a large degree these distinctions derive from the divergence between what we find in the texts and what actually takes place in the world outside. The Sanskrit texts, depending on their type, are sometimes amenable to this type of analysis in various ways and differing degrees. But unless we find concrete external instances of interaction between these two cultures, we cannot be sure to what degree, if any, the forms we find in the text are not the result of internal, purely ideal developments. In a sense, the texts live in an independent world of their own. The law books (*dharmaśāstra*s), those dealing with household rites (*gṛhyasūtra*s) and the sections of the Purāṇas dedicated to the description and eulogy of sacred places (*māhātmya*) are examples of types of texts that are relatively close to the reality 'on the ground'. Others, amongst which the Tantras are prime examples, are much more distant. Out 'in the field' we observe what appears to be the same interaction between two contrasting cultures as the one we find in the texts. They seem so closely analogous that what can be said about one applies also to the other. There is however a major difference between the two situations — anthropological and textual. The former is open to empirical assessment whereas the latter is not. We may conduct surveys which supply us

with quantifiable data concerning the number and nature of deities worshipped in a given village, or even a large town, and by whom. We can ascertain to what degree, if any, a particular deity or ritual is 'sanskritic', that is, textually based. We can observe the manner and degree in which 'non-sanskritic' forms are 'sanskritized' and so on. But this is not the case with the texts. In the village or town, the religious forms present will supply their own terms of reference. Moreover, we are dealing with individual, concrete phenomena, each in their own specific situation and interacting with others. The Tantras of all schools are well known for their rich and vivid religious forms, but although they often refer to the outer world, the images are largely ideal.

It is likely that parts at least of the Tantras were used in the manner in which they present themselves, namely, as directly applicable, prescriptive texts. Even so, most of the liturgies that are textually based are based on texts that were compiled for direct application. Here we find a major point of contact between the inner ideal world of the Tantras and the outer world of their application. Although these are largely Brahminical compilations and so reflect only a part of a society's religious practice, they are, I suggest, a major field of research that needs to be explored to help us in our understanding of the relationship between the 'real' and the 'ideal'. Perhaps this will be part of the pilgrimage that remains for me to complete.

I set out in this journey impelled by the inner call of Kubjikā, the goddess of the Malla's priests, as powerful as it has always been mysterious to me. This strange inner and secret path led me some years later to the revelation of the identity of the Malla's own goddess. I will always remember that event as an overwhelming infusion of energy, a sort of direct initiation by the goddess herself who, I have always felt that she wanted me to know, is pleased.

Finally I should thank the many people who have helped me on my way, fellow travellers, my teachers and my family. There are far too many to list them completely. Some, however, I cannot fail to mention. My first Sanskrit teacher was Ambikadatta Upadhyaya. A fine old man when I first met him, I was then at the end of my teens.

Hemendranath Chakravarti introduced me first to Kashmiri Śaiva sources. A few years later Swami Lakshmanjoo graced me with his teachings and initiation. Alexis Sanderson, now professor of Sanskrit at the University of Oxford, although just a few years older than me was, and remains, a great light on my path, as he is for many others. Bagirathaprasad Tripathi, better known as Vāgīśa Śāstrī, spent years patiently teaching me some of the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar. Vrajavallabha Dvivedi will ever remain in my heart as a shining example of formidable dedication and the high summits contemporary Indian scholarship can scale.

Words could not express the gratitude I feel for the great grace I have received to live for over thirty years now in Kāśī — City of Light and learning. However much Western scholars may contribute to the development of our understanding of Indian religion and culture, they are all, like myself, at its feet gathering its wisdom for themselves, India and the world. Amongst the many great Indian exponents of this tradition I have had the good fortune to listen to and learn from include T.R.V. Murti, Jaideva Singh, Rameshvar Jha, Premlata Sharma, K.D. Tripathi, Rai Anand Krishna, R.C. Sharma, L.N. Sharma, K.N. Mishra, Narayan Mishra, Rivaprasad Dvivedi, Kamalesh Jha, Navajivan Rastogi, and countless others who are all my venerated teachers and guides.

Amongst my friends from whom I have learnt much I cannot fail to mention Rana P.B. Singh to who I am especially grateful for the maps in this volume. Shitalaprasad Upadhyay, at present associate professor in the Yogatantra Department of Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, has also been a great source of knowledge and inspiration. Abroad, the first fellow travellers who comes to mind are David White, the great sage of Santa Barbara, and his student Jeffrey Lidke whose moral support has been unfailing.

Above all, I cannot fail to prostrate to the great masters of the past. As a foreigner, I should be, and am, profoundly grateful to have been admitted to the immeasurable spiritual and cultural wealth of India. I, along with the many other foreign scholars, seek to sustain this culture. Above all we wish to help to make the country of its provinance known, appreciated and respected throughout the world. It is a sad fact that India will be given the place it deserves amongst

the greatest nations of the world only in proportion to its economic development. But my hope is that the world will honour it more for being the great cradle of civilization and spirituality that it is.

If I have in any way inadvertently betrayed the depth and expanse of India's spirituality by my shortcomings or misunderstanding, may I be corrected.

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Self-Awareness, Own Being and Egoity

The thesis proposed in this paper can be simply stated in a few words. One of the most distinctive features of the monistic Śaivism that developed in Kashmir from about the middle of the ninth century with the revelation of the *Śivasūtra* to Vasugupta was introduced some three generations later by Utpaladeva, one of the major exponents of the Pratyabhijñā school. This was the concept of what, for convenience, I will term the 'absolute ego'. It is a concept of the one absolute reality which is at once Śiva, the Self and pure consciousness understood as a self-reflective pure egoity (*ahaṁbhāva*). It is the transcendental ground within which and through which the entire range of cosmic and individual principles in the sphere of the subject, object and means of knowledge are generated, sustained and destroyed through a process in which its transcendental nature immanentalises itself even as it reverts back to transcendence.

The concern of this paper is to establish that it is with Utpaladeva that this subtle and complex intuition of the absolute first appears in the history of Indian philosophical thought. In order to support this thesis and explain how I came to it, I will deal with a number of basic concepts, most of them historically prior to Utpaladeva, others new, that have led to its formulation.

Our point of departure are the earliest works that can be defined as Kashmir Śaiva in the sense that they represent themselves as systematic treatises (*śāstra*) of avowedly purely human authorship rather than revealed scripture. These are the *Spandakārikā*, written either by Vasugupta or his direct disciple Kallaṭabhaṭṭa, and the *vṛtti* on the same that is universally attributed to the latter. The metaphysical, theological and soteriological views they present are relatively sim-

ple compared to the complex systems worked out in the treatises that followed immediately afterwards in the most vigorous period of Kashmiri Śaivism's development from the middle of the ninth to the middle of the eleventh centuries. Even so, they provide us with a fairly complete formulation of the nature of ultimate reality.

The first thing to notice here from the point of view of our present discussion is that neither the *Spandakārikā* nor its *vṛtti* take the ego to be in any way absolute. They fall in line with all the other schools of thought that that developed in India up to then which unanimously agree that the ego — the 'I' — is relative.[1] From one point of view, the ego is understood as the *ahaṁkāra* which is a part of the inner mental organ that processes, coordinates and identifies the sensory data supplied by the senses. From a different of point of view it is the 'notion of self' — *ahaṁpratyaya.* As such it is the conceptualized counterpart of the notion formed of the object in such a way that when we say "I see and know this particular X", both 'I' and 'X' are part of a proposition formed at the conceptual, discursive level (*vikalpa*). It is also the 'feeling' one has of oneself as reacting subjectively to the object as pleasant or painful, that is, as involved in the play of the *guṇas*; and so, the 'notion of self' appears in the notions the perceiver forms of himself as happy, sad or dull. Although related to one's own deeper authentic nature in that this is the essential ground of such egoic notions, they are distinct from it. Thus in the *Spandakārikā* we read:

"No notions such as 'I am happy', 'I am miserable' or 'I am attached' (exist independently). They all clearly reside elsewhere, namely, in that which threads through (all) the states of pleasure and the rest."

Kallaṭa comments:

"The (subject) threads through all the states (of consciousness). He connects them together (in the continuity of the experience that): 'I am the same (person) who is happy and sad, or who later becomes attached'. (They all reside) 'elsewhere' in that state independent (of all transitory perceptions). As scripture (declares): '(this) one's own nature is considered to be the highest reality'." [2]

[1] For an extensive account of the concept of the ego according to the major schools of Indian Philosophy see: M. Hulin, *Le Principe de l'Égo dans la Pensée Indienne Classique. La Notion d'Ahaṁkāra*, Paris, 1978.

[2] SpKā, 4 and *vṛtti* on the same.

This view does not posit a pure 'I-ness' outside and apart from relational, conceptual propositions referring to cognitive acts. The ego-notion (*ahaṁpratyaya*) is the condition of the disturbed or disrupted (*kṣubdha*) state of personal existence which is that of the individual soul subject to the innate impurity of ignorance and, hence, transmigratory existence. Thus the *Spandakārikā* declares:

"An individual, desirous of doing various things but incapable of doing them due to his innate impurity, (experiences) the supreme state (*param padam*) when disruption (*kṣobha*) ceases."

Kallata comments:

"(The individual soul) pervaded by this innate impurity may desire to act, but even so cannot make contact with this inherent power. However, if the disturbance of his conceived notion of his own identity as 'I' (*aham iti pratyayabhāvarūpa*) were to cease, he would be established in the supreme state." [3]

This disturbed condition, which is the egoic notion of the fettered soul (*paśu*), prevents it from abiding in the state of permanent repose within itself which is its basic condition (*svātmasthiti*), considered, according to this monistic view, to be that of Śiva Himself. Freedom from bondage is thus understood as 'the attainment of one's own nature' (*svātmalābha*). This attainment (*lābha*) or 'laying hold of one's own nature' (*svātmagraha*), though egoless, is not entirely impersonal, as the avoidence of the term '*ātman*' in preference to the term '*svasvabhāva*' in the *Spandakārikā* indicates.

The word '*ātman*' almost invariably figures in the text in compounds where it functions as a reflective pronoun in the sense of 'one's own' rather than meaning the 'Self'. For example, in the eighth *kārikā* we are told that the senses operate by virtue of the power inherent in one's own essential nature. The expression for this is '*ātmabala*' that one could translate as 'the strength or power of the Self'. This would not be right as the use of the analogous form '*svabala*' in *kārikā* 36 indicates. There the author says that objects become progressively more evident to the subject as 'his own strength' i.e. the inherent power of his subjective consciousness, is applied to

[3] SpKā, 9 and *vṛtti* on the same.

their perception.[4] Similarly, objects, perceptions, emotions, mental images and all else that manifests objectively acquire a nature of their own — *ātmalābha* — because they are grounded in the universal vibration of consciousness — *Spanda* — with which one's own nature is identified. For the same reasons it would be wrong to translate the expression '*ātmalābha*' as 'attainment of Self'. In *kārikā* 39 the yogi is instructed to be established within himself. Here too the expression *'svātmani'* should not be translated to mean 'in his own Self'.[5]

In the *vṛtti*, the terms '*svabhāva*' and '*svasvabhāva*', meaning 'own nature' or 'own own nature', are recurrent. We also come across the synonyms '*ātmasvarūpa*' [6] and *'ātmasvabhāva'*.[7] In one place, however, Kallaṭa writes: "*sarvātmaka evāyamātmā*", i.e. "this Self is indeed of the nature of all things". The Self referred to here is the individual living being (*jīva*). Here, Kallaṭa seems to be making use of a standard expression drawn from the Upaniṣads well known to his literate readers generally to state that the individual soul himself, just as he is, is complete and perfect.

The 'own nature' of an entity is that which makes it what it is and accounts for all its inherent properties and causal efficacy. Śiva as one's own 'own nature' tends to personalize this inner identity, compared to the concept of Self worked out in other types of monism that tend towards a transcendentalism in which the Self is understood to be the transcendental ground of the person and, as such, has no inherent phenomenal properties or powers. Its causality or agency are adventitious qualities, they are secondary and non-essential, just as a jar can be blue or red without being essentially affected by its colour.

[4] यथा ह्यर्थोऽस्फुटो दृष्टः सावधानेऽपि चेतसि ।
भूयः स्फुटतरो भाति स्वबलोद्योगभावितः ।।
SpKā, 36.

[5] अनेनाधिष्ठिते देहे यथा सर्वज्ञतादयः ।
तथा स्वात्मन्यधिष्ठानात्सर्वत्रैव भविष्यति ।।
"When the body is sustained by this, one knows everything that happens within it. Similarly, (this same omniscience) will prevail everywhere (when the yogi) finds his support in his own nature." SpKā, 39.

[6] *Vṛtti* on SpKā, 5.

[7] SpKā, 11 and 19.

The distinctive terminology points to a more personal view of the Self that is not just a passive perceiver, but which is also the subject that is known only through an act of self-awareness (*svasaṁvedana-saṁvedya*), never as an object. It seems that once the individual Self, which as pure consciousness is known through an act of self-awareness, is identified with Śiva who is one's own 'own nature', and this self-awareness is furthermore understood to be basic non-discursive awareness which precedes, sustains and generates discursive awareness and individuating mental representations (*vikalpa*), we then come very close to the intuitive insight of an absolute self-identity experienced as a pure 'I' consciousness. But this need not necessarily be the case, for virtually all Indian schools of thought accept that the distinctive feature of the subject is this capacity for self-awareness, contrasted with the phenomenological status of the object which is never an object of its own awareness but always that of a subject. There is no need, even, to posit the existence of an absolute Self for this to be the case. Thus, the Buddhist Dinnāga, for example, also refers to the distinction between subject and object and their relation in these terms. The individual soul can be self-conscious without this implying any inherent egoity, even as this self-consciousness is the basis of an adventitious notion of 'I'. This is the view of the earlier Śaivasiddhānta texts. Thus, Sadyojyoti in his *Nareśvaraparīkṣā* in the course of his proof for the existence of the individual soul advances the argument that the individual Self exists because it is "the field of the notion of I" (*ahaṁpratyayagocara*). Rāmakaṇṭha comments:

"(Although) the notion of I (*ahaṁpratyaya*) is (distinct from the Self) which is the object of ascertainment, it is perceived concomitantly with it because it is a reflective awareness of the persisting perceiving subject and has the Self as it object (*viṣaya*). Thus both are true as they are established to exist by their (common nature) as consciousness. Thus there is no non-existence of the Self." [8]

Rāmakaṇṭha continues, saying that both the Self and the notion of Self are invariably found together although the Self transcends thought constructs. Thus, even though the notion of Self is a thought construct, it cannot be said to be false in the sense that it can indicate something unreal. All reflective determination (*adhyavasāya*) of one's

[8] NP, p. 38.

Self is invariably accompanied by this notion and thus, being an act of consciousness it is as veridical as the Self which is consciousness. He goes on to say that the notion of Self may appear to be a projection of conceived egoic arrogation onto an object, namely, the body etc. and not the Self, in such a way that one thinks "I am fat" or "I am thin". Countering this possible objection he says that the ego notion relating to the Self is non-specific i.e. it is not specified by objective qualities. This unspecified (*aviśiṣṭa*) notion is primary and as such applies to the Self.[9]

Kallaṭa and the *Spandakārikā* teach an idealism according to which the individual soul as the enjoyer (*bhoktṛ*) is one with the object of enjoyment because the perceptive awareness (*saṁvedana*), which links them as subject and object and is the common reality of both, is possessed by the former as its essential nature. This perceptive awareness focused upon itself is the conscious state of the subject who contains and is all things.[10] The proximity of this notion to that of the Self or 'own nature' as a pure ego-consciousness is so close that it seems natural for the later commentators, who all quote Utpaladeva and so post-date him, to interpret the *kārikā's* view in this way. Thus Rājānaka Rāma insists that there are two egos which he contrasts, the one a notion and hence 'created' or 'artificial' (*kṛtrima*), and the other uncreated and hence one's own nature itself. Similarly, Abhinavagupta says:

"From the intellect arises the product of the ego, which consists of the notion that this light, generated by the individual soul, reflected (in the intellect) and sullied by objectivity, is (the true) ego ... Thus as is indicated by the word 'product', this (created ego) is different from the essential nature of the ego which is uncreated and perfectly pure freedom." [11]

The artificial ego seemingly limits and binds the uncreated ego.[12] In this state of bondage the individual perceiver believes himself conditioned by the countless forms of diversity related to the divided field in which he operates, namely, the egoity (*ahaṁpratīti*) estab-

[9] Ibid., p. 38-9.

[10] SpKā, 28-29.

[11] TĀ, 9/230-2.

[12] SpKāvi, p. 113 and 137.

lished on the basis of mutual exclusion between differing egos.[13] It is egoity falsely projected onto the body which is the way in which, according to Utpaladeva also, we perceive the unfolding of the power of Māyā.[14] Conversely, as Rājānaka Rāma explains, the pure 'I' consciousness encompasses the series of pure principles from Śiva to Śuddhavidyā. It is one's own essential nature (*svasvabhāva*) as Paramaśiva who is free of all contact with duality.[15] Thus, an uninterrupted awareness of the egoity (*ahaṁkāra*) which is that of one's own true essential nature (*svasvabhāva*) is liberating. The egoity (*ahaṁpratyaya*) which takes its support from the body is destroyed when it is eradicated by the authentic ego.[16] "It melts", to use Rājānaka Rāma's expression, "like a heap of snow, by coming in contact with the light of the sun of the authentic ego (*svābhāvikāhaṁpratyaya*) that transcends all fictitious supports".[17] At the same time, however, as Rājānaka Rāma says, the egoity (*ahaṁpratyaya*) projected onto the body is not false (*upapanna*) in that it ultimately abides in a reality that is not transitory.[18] Thus, according to him, whatever the Self sustains through the medium of the ego (*aham iti pratipatti*) is its body. The fettered state is the projection of this notion into a reality which is other than the Self, while the liberated state is that in which this ego notion is realized to be that of one's own authentic nature (*svasvabhāva*).[19] Thus, Rājānaka Rāma says of the awakened yogi:

"When his ego-sense (*ahaṁpratipatti*) is firmly established in the essential nature of his authentic identity (*ātmasvabhāva*) which is distinct from the body etc. and manifests brilliantly evident to the clear vision that unfolds by the enlightened awareness generated (in him) by the rays of energy which fall (upon him), emitted by Śiva, the Sun (of consciousness), it is then made manifest by the powers of the reflective awareness (*parāmarśaśakti*) of the cognitive conscious-

[13] Ibid., p. 132.

[14] ĪP, 3/1/8.

[15] SpKāvi, p. 128.

[16] Ibid., p. 86 and 113.

[17] Ibid., p. 39.

[18] Ibid., p. 39.

[19] Ibid., p. 112.

ness of things just as they are in reality. Then he realizes Śiva who is the Wheel of Energies consisting of the manifestations of the wonderfully diverse universe sketched out (in this way) by (His own) will alone." [20]

Rājānaka Rāma was Utpaladeva's direct disciple and the profound influence that the Pratyabhijnā had on him is evident throughout his commentary. This is so not only in his presentation of the realization of Spanda and its activity as an act of recognition but in his views on the two types of egoity. That this is his personal interpretation of Spanda doctrine and not originally to be found in it is confirmed, partially at least, by the absence of this distinction in Bhagavadutpala's commentary which, apparently more consistent with the *Kārikā* and *vṛtti,* invariably relegates all ego-consciousness to the level of a notion. He does this, it seems to me, not so much as a conscious attempt to keep Spanda doctrine 'pure', i.e. not to overlay it with higher hermeneutical interpretations, but because the view which particularly inspired him was not that of the Pratyabhijñā, although he quotes Utpaladeva several times, but the monistic Vaiṣṇava idealism of Vāmanadatta's *Saṁvitprakāśa.* In this work, the sense of 'I' is consistently relegated to the level of a thought construct: it is the notion of 'I' (*asmadvikalpa*) and nothing more.[21]

Kṣemarāja, the remaining major commentator, takes the 'I' sense to be absolute, adding to it further interpretations which, as we shall see, are a continuation of the views his teacher Abhinavagupta developed. Here absolute 'I' consciousness is Śakti, which Kṣemarāja identifies with Spanda, the power of Śiva, one's own authentic nature that infuses its energy into the body and mind. He writes: "Even that which is insentient attains sentience because it is consecrated with drops of the juice (of the aesthetic delight — *rasa*) of I-ness. Thus that principle not only renders the senses fit to operate once it has made them sentient, but does the same also to the subject that one presumes is their impeller even though he is (merely) conceived to exist (*kalpita*). Thus he presumes that it is he who impels the senses. But he also is nothing if he is not penetrated by the Spanda principle." [22]

[20] Ibid., p.112.

[21] See chapter 3: *The Saṁvitprakāśa — The Light of Consciousness.*

[22] SpNir, p. 22.

But let's get back to Utpaladeva. It is well known to students of Kashmiri Śaivism that Somānanda was his teacher, as well as the first exponent of the philosophy which was to draw its name from Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*. Somānanda wishes to trace the geneology of his views to personalities associated with the propagation of Śaivism in the Tantras.[23] In this way he not only tries to stamp his views with the seal of scriptural authority but also affirms that they are ultimately drawn from the Tantras. Now, it is in fact true that a number of basic concepts he presents are already taught in Tantric traditions which precede him. But even though he draws from this fund of ideals he nowhere posits the existence of an absolute ego, and in this he is consistent with the Tantras.

When we get to Utpaladeva, even though he declares that the "new and easy path" he expounds in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* is that shown to him by his teacher Somānanda in the *Śivadṛṣṭi*,[24] he introduces an entirely new idea, namely, that the ego-sense, that is relative when related to the body, is ultimately grounded in an authentic, absolute ego. Thus as Abhinava tells us:

"The idea that that which manifests as the 'I' is perfect, omnipresent, omnipotent and eternal being, that is, the idea that the 'I' is identical with the Lord, the subject, the lustrious one... was not in vogue before because of (man's state of innate) ignorance. This *śāstra* makes people fit to live this idea in practice by bringing to light (Śiva's) powers of knowledge, will and action. This happens by virtue of this treatise on the Pratyabhijñā which essentially consists of a series of proofs to justify this idea in practice." [25]

Utpaladeva develops the notions of the Self and absolute being that were already worked out before him to what he must have thought were their ultimate conclusion. Thus he writes that: "repose in one's own essential nature (*svasvarūpa*) is the reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) that 'I am'." [26] One might say that here Utpaladeva is explaining in his own Pratyabhijñā terms that the Spanda doctrine

[23] ŚDṛ, 7/107-122.

[24] ĪP, 4/1/16.

[25] Commentary on ĪP, 2/3/17.

[26] APS, 15.

adopted from the Tantras of "establishment in one's own essential nature" (*svasvarūpasthiti*) implies that this, the liberated condition, is that of the pure ego-identity.

Now in order to make this transition, Utpaladeva must introduce a concept which finds a precedent in Bhartṛhari who declares that the universal light of consciousness shines as all things. Moreover, it must be full of the power of speech, otherwise it would not be the one light but the darkness (*aprakāśa*) of its negation, that is, the Māyic world of multiplicity. This power he defines as "self-reflective awareness" (*pratyavimarśinī*).[27] But Bhartṛhari does not explore this notion fully to reach the ultimate conclusion that absolute being, as self-reflective consciousness, is absolute egoity as Utpaladeva does. According to Utpaladeva, *vimarśa* operates as the

[27] VP, 1/124. It is a notable fact that this term, so important in the technical vocabulary of the Pratyabhijñā, is not at all common in the Śaivāgama. It does not belong to the common terminology of the Tantric systems syncretised into Kashmiri Śaivism, at least as far as we can gather from the sources quoted by the Kashmiri authors themselves. As an example of the uncommon occurrence of the terms *vimarśa* we can cite the *Kālikula*: "The supreme power of the lord of the gods whose nature is supreme consciousness is reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) endowed with omniscient knowledge." (Quoted in NTu, I p. 21). Abhinavagupta refers to the *Gamatantra* which says: "The deity of Mantra is considered to be reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) co-extensive in being with Great Consciousness" (TĀ, 16/286). A passage quoted from the *Triśirobhairavatantra* reads: "The supreme Sky (*parākāśa* is said to be the well formed space (*suṣira*), the lord of the principles of existence, the fourth state which pervades from above and the center. It is the abode of contemplation (*vimarśadhāman*)." (TĀ, comm. 5/91). While in the third reference '*vimarśa*' clearly has a broad, generic sense denoting the contemplative consciousness that the fully developed yogi has of the supreme principle, the two former references equate *vimarśa* directly with Śakti. They do certainly refer quite clearly to a concept of consciousness in which it reflects upon itself. But these are the only passages, out of several hundreds quoted in Kashmiri Śaiva works, in which this term occurs, and it seems that *vimarśa* in these passages also has a broader, less specific sense than in the Pratyabhijñā. Thus, what appears to be the meaning here is that the yogi who contemplates the one absolute consciousness does so by virtue of the power of contemplation inherent in consciousness itself which is, as the *Triśirobhairavatantra* says, the abode of contemplation.

reflective awareness which is the non-discursive judgement that consciousness has of its own infinite nature. It is both its universal creative and cognitive power through which it forms itself into the All and through which the All is resolved back into it. Moreover, it is the ground of all possible judgement and representation conceptual (*savikalpa*) and intuitive (*nirvikalpa*), of the contents of consciousness in and through each cognitive act, as the self-awareness of a pure non-discursive egoic consciousness. It is this inherent attribute of consciousness which makes it ultimate. Echoing Bhartṛhari, Utpaladeva says:

"If one were to consider the reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) of the light of consciousness (*prakāsa*) to be other than its own essential nature (*svabhāva*), it would be as insentient as crystal even when the light is coloured by seemingly external phenomena (*artha*)." [28]

This reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) is explicitely identified by Utpaladeva with the reflective awareness of 'I' (*ahaṁpratyavimarśa*), a term we can contrast with the earlier 'notion of I' (*ahaṁpratyaya*). It is the 'I' consciousness (*aham iti vimarśa*) which manifests as the subjectivity (*pramātṛtva*) of the psycho-physical complex, in the notion (*vikalpa*) both of self and its opposite.[29] But as the reflective awareness of 'I' is in itself the very nature of the light of consciousness (*prakāśatman*), it is free of all thought constructs (*vikalpa*) as these depend upon the duality of relative distinctions.[30]

An important aspect of the concept of *vimarśa* — which, as we shall see, Abhinavagupta developed into a wide ranging hermeneutical key to interpret Tantric doctrine — is its identification with the supreme level of Speech. Somānanda had already done this before, but his concept of *vimarśa* was much more limited than the one Utpaladeva developed. One of the arguments Somānanda advances, in refuting Bhartṛhari's view that *paśyantī* is the supreme level of speech, is that *paśyantī* — the Speech which 'sees' — cannot view either itself or the supreme principle without this involving both in a subject and object relationship which degrades it and the

[28] ĪP, 1/5/11.

[29] Ibid., 1/6/4-5.

[30] Ibid., 1/6/1.

ultimate principle to the level of an object. This would then require another *paśyantī* to see that and that another leading to an unacceptable infinite regress.[31] Thus, the perceiver's subjective status as the seer (*drṣṭṛtva*) precedes *paśyantī* as the supreme level of speech. Although Somānanda calls this subjective state '*vimarśa*', it is not, as it is for Utpaladeva, the awareness the light of consciousness has of itself as all things and as beyond them, for that would involve an unacceptable split into the internal subject-object relationship he wishes to avoid. Thus, Somānanda explains it as follows:

"Just as the product that an agent like a potter (intends to generate) — a jar, for example — abides as a reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) in the form of an intention (*icchā*), such is the case here also (with Supreme Speech). This (supreme level of speech) abides prior (to all things), for otherwise, if consciousness were not to possess a subtle (inner) outpouring (*ullāsa*) which abides intent upon its task (*kāryonmukha*), how could that desire unfold (and reach fulfillment)? Śiva abides as the one who is endowed with the state of this (supreme level of Speech) when in a condition of oneness (*sāmarasya*)." [32]

In short, Somānanda maintains that Śiva is absolute consciousness as charged inwardly with a power that flows through it, even as it rests in itself and expresses itself as a tension directed towards its externalization in the form of the phenomenal world in and through the act of perception. In the following passage, Utpaladeva brings together a set of concepts already formulated before him in his concept of *vimarśa,* identified with the supreme level of speech, to present it in a new more complex perspective.

"The nature of the power of consciousness (*citi*) is reflective awareness (*pratyavimarśa*) and is supreme Speech which, spontaneously emergent, is the lordship of the Supreme Self, the freedom which is the intent (*aunmukhya* towards both immanence and transcendence). That pulsing radiance (*sphurattā*), the Great Being unspecified by time and space, is the essence of the Supreme Lord and so is said to be His Heart." [33]

[31] ŚDṛ, 2/55-6.

[32] ŚDṛ, 2/84-6a.

[33] ĪP, 1/5/13-14.

We might notice incidently, before moving on, that this important passage leaves the way clear for Abhinavagupta in his subsequent detailed hermeneutics of the Tantras to expound the symbolism of the Heart as the dynamics of pure I-consciousness, which he develops in particular in his commentaries on the *Parātrīśikā*. We shall return to this point later.

Now we must briefly attempt to tackle the Tantric sources prior to Utpaladeva. Although I cannot claim, of course, to have read all the Tantras that predate Utpaladeva, in none of what little I have managed to study in print and manuscript is there any mention of an absolute ego. While all the other notions we have dealt with concerning the Self and its relation to the ego and ultimate reality are attested implicitly in the Tantras, this is not the case with the absolute ego. Barring one important exception which I shall deal with later, which is anyway very ambigious, Kashmiri Śaivites do not quote a single āgamic source in which the concept appears. One could argue, perhaps, that they did not choose to do so, but this seems hardly likely if we consider the key role it assumes from Utpaladeva's time onwards. On the other hand, a host of other notions that are woven together in the fully developed notion of the absolute ego which we find in Abhinavagupta are found there. It is hard to resist the conclusion that what has taken place is a higher hermeneutic in which there has not only been interpretation and presentation of single notions, but a grand synthesis of various concepts of the absolute, already implicit in the Tantras with that of the absolute ego.

There is no point in examining every detail of this process; that would require an extensive study. All that can be done here is to present a few key examples that can serve as representative illustrations of this hermeneutic method. We may begin with the sole reference amongst those quoted by Kashmiri Śaivite authors from the Tantras that can be construed to be one to an absolute ego. This is a verse quoted by Abhinavagupta and by Maheśvarānanda in his *Mahārthamañjarī* who attributes it to the *srīkaṇṭhīyasaṁhitā*.[34] In the original Sanskrit it reads:

आदिमान्त्यविहीनास्तु मन्त्राः स्युः शरदभ्रवत् ।
गुरोर्लक्षणमेतावदादिमान्त्यं च वेदयेत् ।।

[34] TĀ, 3/223a-4b.

Translated, this means:

"Mantras devoid of the first (letter) and the last (are barren) like autumn clouds. Know that this consciousness of the first and last (letters) is the characteristic of the master."

Although apparently insignificant, this verse is extremely important as it is the only one Kashmiri Śaivites quote as being a reference to the absolute ego in the Tantras. One may however, understand this cryptic verse to mean simply that the adept must recite his mantra mindful of each part, including its beginning and end. Once the adept can maintain an abiding, undistracted state of mindful concentration on the entire mantra from the first to the last letters, he attains a level of spiritually mindful concentration that makes him fit to be a teacher of others. But Abhinavagupta understands this verse in a quite different, more elevated way, which is explained as follows by Jayaratha in his commentary on this passage:

"The first (letter) is (A, symbolic of the) absolute (*anuttara*) and the last is HA (which symbolizes the completion of its emission); thus even mantras, if devoid of the reflective awareness of 'I' (AHAṂ) which is (encompassed by these) the first and last letters (of the alphabet) and are not known to be of that nature, are like autumn clouds — that is to say, they do nothing. [...] While if, on the contrary, they are known to be the supreme vitality of mantra (*paramantravīrya*) which is the reflective awareness of 'I' they perform their respective functions." [35]

What Jayaratha is saying becomes clear when we examine the context in which this reference appears. Abhinavagupta dedicates the third chapter of his *Tantrāloka* to a detailed exposition of *Mātṛkācakra*. Simply, this is the series of the fifty letters of the alphabet which is understood to exist as fifty energies or aspects of the universal potency of the supreme level of Speech, connected with which mantras are spiritually effective. In the *Tantrasadbhāva,* Śiva says to his consort:

"O dear one, all mantras consist of letters and energy is the soul of these (letters), while energy is *Mātṛkā* and one should know her to be Śiva's nature." [36]

[35] TĀ, II, p. 212.

[36] ŚSūvi, p. 89.

The Tantras deal with this concept extensively. According to one purely Tantric [37] explanation, Mātṛkā as mantric energy is the source of the higher liberating knowledge of non-duality. This is when she operates as the power of *Aghorā* which makes inner and outer manifestation one with Her own nature in the all embracing experience of liberated consciousness.[38] *Mātṛkā* is also the basis of the lower binding knowledge associated with discursive thought when her true nature is unknown. Then she functions as the power *Ghorā* which deprives man of the awareness of unity and obscures Śiva's universal activity. Thus, in this sense too, mantras devoid of the first and last letter, and all those between them in *Mātṛkācakra* are fruitless.

Now according to Abhinavagupta's higher hermeneutics *Mātṛkācakra* represents the creative aspect of pure 'I' consciousness — AHAṂ, that, like a wheel, rotates from A to HA and back again around the hub of bindu — Ṁ. There is no point in dealing at length with this highly complex symbolism here which is worked out in Abhinava's commentaries on the *Parātrīśikā*. A few remarks will suffice. Abhinavagupta introduces his explanation of the secret the goddess seeks to know from the god by quoting Utpaladeva as saying that "egoity (*ahaṁbhāva*) is said to be the repose the light of consciousness has within its own nature".[39] He identifies this pure 'I' consciousness with the supreme level of Speech, as does Utpaladeva:

"In the process of withdrawal, the real I-feeling is that in which all external objects like jars, clothes etc., withdrawn from their manifoldness, come to rest and finally repose in their essential uninterrupted and absolute (*anuttara*) aspect. This absolute (*anuttara*) aspect is the real I-feeling (*ahaṁbhāva*). This is a secret, a great mystery. In the process of expansion, the changeless, unsurpassable, eternal, tranquil and venerable Bhairava is the form 'A'. It is the natural primal sound, the life of the entire range of phonemic energies

[37] Throughout this paper, the expression 'Tantric' refers specifically to matters dealt with in the Tantras. Thus a Tantric explanation is the way something is explained in the Tantras. Similarly, by Tantric symbols, I mean those symbols which are found in the Tantras.

[38] ŚSūvi, appendix p. 9 n. 82, KSTS edition.

[39] APS, 22.

(*sakalakalājālajīvanabhūta*). He, in the process of expansion, assumes the form 'HA', that is, *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti*. Then he expands into a dot, symbolizing objective phenomena (*nararūpeṇa*) and indicative of the entire expansion of Śakti (i.e. the entire manifestation starting with Bhairava). Similarly, the lowest part of the last phase of objective manifestation (*ṁ* or *nara*) has three powers (of will, knowledge and action) whose life is the trident of the energies *Parā, Parāparā* and *Aparā*. In union with emission (*visarga*) that is, the energy of (the letter) HA, (the Point) penetrates the Absolute, that is (the letter) A, which is its fundamental, unalterable state, in the return movement." [40]

Now, while Abhinavagupta understands the reflective awareness of 'I' to be Supreme Speech, the Heart of consciousness, as already posited by Utpaladeva, he adds that it is *Mātṛkā* which is the vitality of mantra (*mantravīrya*). He writes:

"This reflective awareness of this (Mantric) nature, uncreated and unsullied, (the Masters) call the 'I' (*aham*). It is this indeed that is the luminosity of the light (of consciousness). This is the vitality (*vīrya*) and heart of all mantras without which they would be insentient, like a living being without a heart." [41]

Many more observations could be made concerning how Abhinava presents the absolute ego as the highest expression of the ultimate state taught by the Tantric traditions he considers to be the highest. For example, we may briefly observe how he overcodes in this way the Trika conception of reality. The Trika teachers refer to the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* as the supreme authority. Quoting this text, just before the reference we have cited above, he says: "The seed here (of all things) is *Kuṇḍalinī*, the life-principle of the nature of consciousness. From this is born the Triad (*Trika*) of the Absolute (A), the Will (I) and Expansion (U), and from this all the other letters." [42]

[40] PTv, Jayadeva Singh's translation, p. 54-5.

[41] TĀ, 4/192-3. In the PTv, Abhinava similarly defines 'I' consciousness as "wonder which is the very nature of the light of consciousness and the vitality of Mantra which is the Supreme Speech that is innate and uncreated."

प्रकाशस्य हि स्वा[illegible]।

PTv, p. 18 of the text printed with Jayadeva Singh's translation.

[42] TĀ, 3/220b-1a.

As all the letters together are the fifty aspects of the reflective awareness of 'I' consciousness, this, the absolute, is grounded in this way in the supreme Triad, or one of its representations, which is taken as characteristic of the Trika view of the one reality.

Further on Abhinava similarly presents the absolute ego as the ultimate reality the Krama School expounds. This he does by first declaring that *Mātṛkā* has a second aspect known as *Mālinī*. *Mātṛkā* represents dynamic consciousness as perpetually creative; *Mālinī* represents consciousness as perpetually withdrawing into itself all differentiation to fuse it into its universal oneness. This symbolism is supported by the Tantras, but, one could say, at a lower level of self-reflection. *Mātṛkācakra* is a symbolic cosmogram in which the letters of the alphabet are collocated in their normal serial order. *Mālinī* is a different collocation (*prastara*) of the alphabet in which the order is disarranged so that the vowels, symbolizing Śiva's seed (*bīja*), are mixed with the consonants symbolizing Śakti's womb (*yoni*). In this way, Abhinava represents *Mālinī* both as the choatic pleroma into which everything is withdrawn and, at the same time, as the one reality that, fertilizing itself, is adorned with the flux of emission.[43]

Now, just as the supreme form of Speech, identified with *Mātṛkā*, is grounded in Trika as its expansion, so *Mālinī*, similarly identified with Supreme Speech, is said to be Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī (also spelt Kālakarṣiṇī), one of the forms of Kālī worshipped as the embodiment of the dynamic power of consciousness in the Kālīkrama. In this consciousness, Śiva and Śakti, symbolized by the letters A and HA of AHAṂ, unite. Thus Abhinava writes:

"This (i.e. the energy *Mālinī*), which is in reality one only and supreme, is She who attracts Time (*kālakarṣiṇī*) and, by union with the power-holder aspect (of absolute consciousness), assumes the nature of a couple (*yāmala*). The reflective awareness of this (couple) is completely full 'I' (consciousness) which, by virtue of this freedom, manifests division within its own nature. Three-fold is said to be its form when division manifests, namely, (the Speech) of Vision (*paśyantī*), the Middle Voice (*madhyamā*) and gross corporeal Speech (*vaikharī*)." [44]

[43] TĀ, 3/232-3.

[44] TĀ, 3/234-6.

Although the identification of Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī with the supreme level of Speech is attested in purely Krama sources, the identification of this, the supreme energy of consciousness, with absolute egoity is not, although to Abhinavagupta this seems naturally implicit. Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī is the pure conscious energy which courses through subject, object and means of knowledge whilst abiding in a fourth state beyond them (*turīya*) that regenerates itself perpetually, even as it rests in its own nature. Thus it seemed naturally identifiable to him with the absolute ego and its cosmic dynamism. But even so, this identification is far from the intentions of the teachings in the original Krama sources. The Kālīkrama teaches that the ultimate state is egolessness and that it is attained by destroying the ego. Arṇasiṁha writes of Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī that she is:

"Kālikā, the one (reality who is such) by virtue of Her being the (universal) process (of consciousness) in the form of the mistress of the wheel of the cycle (of consciousness). She shines constantly and perfectly and Her inherent attribute is egolessness (*nirahaṁkāradharmiṇī*)." [45]

All her powers are aspects of the Goddess, each of which is worshipped in this, the supreme lithurgy (*pūjākrama*), and they have "arisen to withdraw (all things into undifferentiated consciousness), their forms (the reality) which is free of ego (*nirahaṁkāravigraha*)." [46]

[45] This verse is drawn from a unpublished Krama work by Arṇasiṁha who traces the teachings he expounds to Śivānanda, alias Jñānanetra. Cakrabhānu was the third teacher in the tradition after him. Then from Cakrabhānu, Arṇasiṁha traced two lineages ending with Someśvara and Nāga, both of whom were his teachers and are the fourth in line after Cakrabhānu. Thus if we date Śivānanda as Rastogi does, as living 800-850 AD, then Arṇasiṁha lived sometimes between 950-1000 AD. Unfortunately the title of his work has been lost in the colophon of the sole manuscript recovered so far. It is deposited in the National Archives in Kathmandu and is numbered 5-5183/151 NGMPP reel number A 150/6. This reference appears on folio 32a. The edited text reads:

चक्रचक्रेश्वरीरूपा क्रमेणैकैव कालिका ।
विभात्यनारता सम्यङ् निरहंकारधर्मिणी ।।

[46] Ibid., folio 30b: संहर्तुमुदिता देव्यो निरहंकारविग्रहाः ।

Finally we notice how Kṣemarāja extends his teacher's hermeneutic to his treatment of the Spanda teachings. Kṣemarāja, like his predecessor, Rājānaka Rāma, considers the true nature of the subject to be the inner light of 'I' consciousness. This is the inner form of Śiva. While the outer form is perishable, the inner form is the subjective aspect which is supreme 'I' consciousness for, as Kṣemarāja says, "even though the subject resides in its body, it is still identical with the Lord (who is pure 'I' consciousness)".[47] Kṣemarāja adds a further dimension to the notion of Spanda with respect to the commentators before him by identifying it squarely with the supreme energy of consciousness and this with Supreme Speech and the absolute ego, much as Abhinavagupta does. Thus he says of Spanda that it is the creative autonomy of Śiva (*svātantrya*)[48] as "the perfect I-consciousness (of the Lord) (*pūrṇāhantā*) consisting of the higher power A and the innate power HA which encompass within themselves, as in a bowl, all the letters from A to KṢ. That (*aham*) is the power of Supreme Speech which is the supreme resonance of consciousness (*paranāda*) that is ever emergent (and eternal) although unutterable. It is the great mantra, the life of all, and successionless awareness that contains within itself the uninterrupted series of creations and destructions and encloses within itself the entire aggregate of energies that constitute the cosmic order (*ṣaḍadhvan*) made of innumerable words and their referents..." [49]

To conclude, we may note that others after Kṣemarāja went on to extend these reflections into the brilliantly diverse world of Tantric symbolism in many ways. Śiva is identified with the light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) and Śakti with his reflective awareness (*vimarśa*), and the two are portrayed as locked together in the amorous and sportive play of *kāmakalā*. This is a theme developed by Puṇyānanda and other exegetes of the Śrīvidyā tradition in their commentaries on the *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava* and *Yoginīhṛdaya* and in their

[47] Commentary on SpKā, 16.

[48] Commentary on SpKā, 1.

[49] Commentary on SpKā, 45.

independent works. Here we notice how, amongst other things, basic Tantric cosmological models are overcoded with this brilliant new concept. This becomes especially clear when we compare the cosmologies of the *Prapañcasāra* and *Śāradātilaka*, for example, with that of the *Kāmakalāvilāsa* of Puṇyānanda. In various ways, all three outline a symbolic cosmology in which ultimate reality is represented as splitting itself up initially into two and three elements to then go on and develop out of itself throughout the entire gradiant of cosmic and microcosmic principles. It is only the *Kāmakalāvilāsa* which identifies these original elements with aspects of the pure absolute ego and sees in their interplay and development its cosmic and transcendent activity. This fact is all the more striking when we observe that the original symbol of *Kāmakalā,* that is, the triangle in the center of *Śrīcakra,* as it appears in the *Nityāsoḍaśikārnava* and *Yoginīhṛdaya,* is devoid of this representation. Thus we can clearly see how the concept of an absolute ego is projected onto an earlier symbolic structure overcoding it and thus lending it greater hermeneutical depth through a broader and more profound conception of the absolute. In this way the Śāktas drew substantially from their fellow Śaivites. Thus, Śivānanda, the 12th century commentator on the *Nityāsoḍaśikārṇava,* and one of the earliest teachers of this line, tells us that his tradition originated from Kashmir.[50]

Finally, not only was the concept and the associated Tantric symbolism of the absolute ego developed at the secondary exegetical level but it also found its way into later primary sources. Not only do a number of later Śākta and Śaiva Tantras take it for granted, but its strong appeal influenced the Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātra as well. Thus the *Ahirbudhnyasaṁhitā* and, more particularly, the *Lakṣmītantra,* both of which are clearly influenced by Śaivism, take this as a fundamental conception of the absolute reality which the *Lakṣmītantra* in particular identifies with the goddess who is pure 'I-ness'.

Thus the brilliant insight of one man, Utpaladeva, whose writings are more concerned with philosophical and theological issues than with the intricacies of Tantric symbolism, is used to systematically recode it. In this way we find confirmed the view of the Tantras which declare that "this knowledge (of reality) has three sources,

[50] NṢA, p. 144.

namely, the teacher, the scripture (*śāstra*), and oneself." [51] Although the Indian tradition in general mistrusts new ideas and normally attempts to integrate them into what has gone before so that they may be sealed with the stamp of authority, great new ideas are born from what is, according to Abhinavagupta, the greatest of the three sources of knowledge, namely, oneself. [52]

[51] त्रिप्रत्ययमिदं ज्ञानं गुरुतः शास्त्रतः स्वतः ।
Quoted from the *Kiraṇāgama* in TĀ, 4/78cd-9ab

[52] Ibid., 4/41cd-2ab.

~2~

ABHĀVAVĀDA
THE DOCTRINE OF NON-BEING
A Forgotten Śaiva Doctrine

The *Spandakārikā* is a short but important treatise written in Kashmir in the middle of the 9th century either by Vasugupta or, more probably, by his disciple Kallatabhatta.[1] It is the earliest Kashimiri Śaiva work of avowedly human origin and is traditionally considered to be a concise statement of the essential points of doctrine contained in the *Śivasūtras* revealed to Vasugupta.[2]

Although the *Spandakārikā* does attempt to establish its doctrines on the basis of both reason (*pratipatti*) and experience (*upalabdhi*)[3] it is not cast in the form of an apologetic written to counter possible opponent's views as was, for example, Somānanda's *Śivaṛṣṭi* written soon after it. In one place however, the author is moved to state his view by contrasting it with that of others when he seeks to refute the nihilist view that Non-being is the ultimate liberated condition. What interests us here is who this opponent could have been and what his views were. To begin with let us examine the passage in question. Below is quoted *Spandakārikā* 12 and 13 along with parts of the commentary by Kallaṭabhaṭṭa.

"Non-being cannot become as object of contemplation, nor is there consciousness there; moreover, it is a mistake to believe that one has experienced (non-being) insofar as one has the certainty that 'that was' by (subsequently) coming in contact with determinative discursivity." (12)

[1] For a summary of the controversy concerning the authorship of the *Spandakārikā*, see Rastogi *The Krama Tantricism of Kashmir*, Delhi 1979, p. 113-7.

[2] See SpKāVṛ, p. 40, SpKāvi, p. 165, ŚSūvā, p.2, and ŚSūvi, p. 1-2.

[3] SpKāvi, p.19.

Commentary:

"One should not contemplate non-being as other yogis teach (who say): 'Non-being is to be contemplated until one identifies oneself with it'.

"In fact this (doctrine) is unsound (for two reasons: firstly) because it is wrong to apply (oneself) to the contemplation (*bhāvanā*) of non-being, as it is in fact nothing but a state of unconsciousness; and also because later (once it is over) and one is again affected by discursive thought (*abhiyogasaṁparśa*) one recalls that: 'my state of emptiness has passed'. Nor is that one's own essential nature (*ātmasvabhāva*) insofar as the conscious nature is not remembered in the way one does a state of unconsciousness, but is (in fact) experienced as the experiencing subject, being as it is ever manifest (*nityodita*).

"Therefore one should consider that (state) to be created and artifical like the state of deep sleep. That principle is always apprehended and is not subject to recollection in this manner."(13)

Commentary:

"Artificial and transitory is the state of (the yogi) who has attained a plane of yoga by contemplating non-existence just as it is at the level of deep sleep. Consciousness is one's own essential nature which is always present, and so one should be always dedicated to that alone in accord with the teachings of the master."

The first point to notice here is that the opponent is not directly named. All we know is that he is a yogi and his aim, according to the passage Kallaṭa quotes apparently drawn from scripture, is to become of the nature of Non-existence. Of the three commentators,[4] only Kṣemarāja chooses to identify the opponent here while Rājānaka Rāma avoids the problem altogether by simply saying that these verses are intended for those who may be misled into thinking that, because the Self is devoid of all the qualities of objectivity, the teaching is that 'Non-being' is the goal.[5] Bhagavadutpala is more definite, al-

[4] Apart from Kallaṭabhaṭṭa the commentaries of three other authors survive namely, the *Spandakārikāvivṛti* by Rājānaka Rāma, the *Spandapradīpikā* by Bhagavadutpala, the *Spandanirṇaya* and *Spandasaṁdoha* by Kṣemarāja. It seems that only Kṣemaraja's commentary post-dates Abhinavagupta (c. 950-1025 AD).

[5] SpKāvi, p. 44.

though still vague. He says that these verses are meant to refute the view of the partisans of the doctrine of voidness who maintain that Non-being is the object of contemplation with which the yogi should become one.[6] Kṣemarāja, however, clearly states that the opponents are three; namely, the Śūnyavādin Buddhists, the followers of Akṣapāda, and the Vedāntins who base their views on the Upaniṣadic dictum "in the beginning there was non-being (*asat*)".[7] Certainly all these are possible opponents from the Kashmiri Śaiva point of view. Kṣemarāja refers to them together characterizing their highest state as deep sleep, saying "many philosophers like the Vedāntins, Naiyāyikas, the followers of the Sāṁkhya, the Buddhists and others have fallen into this great and uncrossable ocean of insentience in the form of the void." [8]

We suggest, however, that it is possible that the original opponents did not belong to these groups but were in fact also Śaivites themselves. Although not a well known doctrine, Non-being has at times figured as the supreme principle identified with the Emptiness (*śūnya*) of indeterminate consciousness. Thus according to the *Vijñānabhairava*:

"That which is not an object of knowledge cannot be grasped, and, as the emptiness established in Non-being, that should all be contemplated (*bhāvya*) as being Bhairava, at the end of which (the yogi experiences) the arising of consciousness." [9]

In the *Manthānabhairavatantra*, the supreme Kaula reality which encompasses the union of Śiva and Śakti — Akula and Kula — is praised as "eternally manifest, without master and devoid of any inherent being".[10] The *Jñānāmṛtarasāyana*, quoted in Śivopādhyāya's commentary on the *Vijñānabhairava*, exalts "Non-being established in Being" as "the supreme principle beyond (all) principles".[11] Even Utpaladeva, the well-known exponent of the Pratyabhijñā who as-

[6] SpPra, p.101.

[7] ChānUp, 3/11/1. Kṣemarāja calls these Vedāntins '*abhāvabrahmavādins*': *asad eva idam āsīt — ity abhāvabrahmavādinaḥ śūnyānubhāvam avagāhya sthitāḥ mādhyamikā api evam eva* | PrHṛ comm. Sū. 8.

[8] SpNir, p. 76.

[9] VB, 127.

[10] *niḥsvabhāvam anātham ca vande kaulam sadoditam* | MBT (Y) fl. 27b.

[11] *tattvātītam param tattvam abhāvam bhāvāśritam* | VB, p. 80.

serts that nothing can exist outside the Light of Śiva's consciousness and that which hypothetically does so is merely non-existent (*abhāvamātra*), seems aware that 'non-being' can be intuited in some way when he says: "even non-being which is (thus) apprehended is of the nature of consciousness alone." [12]

An important source for Śaiva nihilism is the *Svacchandabhairava-tantra*. Śiva the Supreme God and ultimate principle is generally, in this work, represented in positive terms. We do find, however, that in places when the Tantra attempts to express the transcendent acosmic nature of the supreme reality, it finds no better way to do so than in terms of the absence of phenomenal Being. Again, *Abhāva* — Non-being — is a term in the SvT for the supreme reality equated with Śiva, understood as both transcendent Non-being and present in all things as their essential nature as 'pure Being' (*sattāmātra*). Non-being is therefore to be understood as reality which is not merely phenomenally existent. Reality is pure Being which is Non-being. In one place this point is made by contrasting the wisdom of logic and other worldly (*laukika*) philosophies, which are binding, to knowledge of Śiva (Śivajñāna):

"All the goals achieved by following worldly and other doctrines are effortlessly attained when the knowledge of Śiva that comes into effect at the end of Atimārga arises. O goddess! Everyone does not achieve it for it is extremely pure and brings about union (*yoga*) in the Supreme Abode which is that of Non-being. Non-being is beyond contemplation and its domain is beyond the universe. Free of the mind, intellect and the rest, it is devoid of reason and doctrine. It is the imperishable Lord, beyond perception and the other means of knowledge, beyond all reason and authority, free of bondage and mantra, omniscient, omnipresent, tranquil, pure and free of accidents." [13]

Non-being is again presented as the supreme state in another section in the SvT which deals with the progressive rise of consciousness through the phases of the syllable 'OṂ' in consonance with the pervasions of the vital breath through the centers of the body, each presided over by a deity termed a '*karaṇa*' — meaning 'instrument' — representing an aspect of the universal cause of creation and destruction. The process is termed "the abandonment of the instruments"

[12] Quoted by Kṣemarāja in his commentary on ŚSt, 12/13.

[13] SvT, 11/190-3.

because, as consciousness in the form of the vital breath rises from one to the other, the lower is abandoned for the higher. This rise can be represented schematically as follows.[14]

Phases of OṂ	Instrument	Location in the body
A	Brahmā	Heart
U	Viṣṇu	Throat
M	Rudra	Centre of the palate
Bindu, Ardhacandra and Nirodhikā	Īśvara	Centre of the eyebrows
Nāda to Nādānta	Sadāśiva	From the forehead to the head
Śakti, Vyāpinī and Samanā up to Unmanā	Śiva	Centre of the head upwards

The level of Samanā — the Equal One — is projected symbolically into the top knot (*śikhā*) at the apex of the microcosmic body. Here the yogi experiences the "equalness of flavour" (*samarasa*) of all things. This is because his consciousness is not directed at a specific object (*mantavya*). Thus his mind abides in a state of pure indeterminate awareness (*mananamātra*). By going beyond this level the yogi's consciousness becomes pure, and by resting in the power of the Transmental (*unmanā*), which is the undivided Light that illumines the entire universe, he attains Śiva.[15] In this way, the yogi goes beyond even the level Beyond Mind and so abandons the six instruments and merges into the seventh which is Paramaśiva beyond them. According to the SvT this is: "extremely subtle, the supreme state (*bhāva*) said to be Non-being (*abhāva*)."

Kṣemarāja comments: "The supreme state is the supreme being (*sattā*) of Paramaśiva. It should be known to be extremely subtle and the universal cause which, because its nature consists of the cessation (*prakṣaya*) of all being, is Non-being." [16] Thus Unmanā — the Transmental — in relation to this state is lower insofar as it is the

[14] SvT, 4/262-6.

[15] SvT, II, p. 166.

[16] SvT, 4/268b and commentary.

reflective awareness of one's own nature directed in a subtle way (*kiṁcidaunmukhya*) to its realization. It represents, in other words, the highest and subtlest limit of immanence as the universal Being (*mahāsattā*) which contains and is both being and non-being.[17] At the same time, the power of the Transmental is the direct means to the supreme state of Non-being. Thus while contemplation of the other lower phases in the development of OṀ bestow yogic powers (*siddhi*) of an increasing order of perfection, it alone bestows liberation directly. Therefore the Tantra enjoins that the yogi should constantly contemplate the supreme and subtle Non-being by means of the Transmental.[18] This is because Non-being is beyond all the senses and mind and is, according to Kṣemarāja, the pure knower which has no objectively distinguishable characteristics (*alakṣya*). The Tantra concludes:

"Non-being should be contemplated by means of Being having rendered Being without foundation. (In this way) one attains the plane of Non-being free of all limitation. This is the abandonment of the instruments." Kṣemarāja comments: "The plane whose nature is Non-being is that in which no phenomenal entities (*bhāvāḥ*) exist. It should be contemplated by Being which is Supreme Being (*parasattā*) of the nature of consciousness. (In response to the query) 'surely the consciousness-principle is that which bestows being?' (He replies by saying that this is to be done) 'having rendered Being without foundation'. 'Being' is that which exists (namely everything) from Sadāśiva to Earth. This is rendered without foundation and free of support in its tranquil (i.e. unmanifest) state by penetrating into the abode of power thus rendering it of the nature (of the Transmental)." [19]

The same theme is again taken up a little further on when the Tantra comes to deal with the nature of the Voids. These are seven within which are distributed the phases of OṀ. As before, six levels are to be transcended and merged into the seventh which is "supremely subtle and devoid of all states".[20] The lower Voids are impure because they are unstable. Similarly the sixth Void, which is that of the Transmental, although Śakti and as such the way to achieve the high-

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 4/277a.

[19] SvT, II, p.178.

[20] SvT, 4/292a.

est Void, is below it. It is the vibration of consciousness (*spanda*), which is in a state of subtle motion (*kiñciccalatva*)[21] whereas the supreme principle is immobile. It is the seventh Void which is Non-being.[22]

The SvT declares "that which is not void is called the Void, while the Void is said to be Non-being. Non-being is taught to be that wherein existing things have ceased to exist. (It is) pure Being (*sattāmātra*) supremely tranquil. That (transcendental) place abides in a certain undefinable manner."[23]

Kṣemarāja is quick to point out that what is meant here by 'Non-being' is the principle of consciousness (*cittattva*) and that it is not 'empty' in the sense of being nothing at all, but is called the Void because in it all objectivity ceases. There can be little doubt, however, that the Tantra is here extolling Non-being as the supreme principle which is subtle beyond all levels of subtlety. It pervades the gross lower levels and in so doing itself becomes gross and subtle.[24] In short, Non-being is the pure Being which both transcends and constitutes all levels of existence. Although called Non-being and is said to be 'empty' it should not be confused with a mere nothing.

Although the presentation of the supreme principle in such strongly apophatic terms is not common in the Śaivāgamas, it is not exclusive to the SvT. The *Tantrasadbhāva,* a work known and quoted by Kashmiri Śaiva authors,[25] elaborates further. It quotes wholesale

[21] The expression '*kiñciccalatva*' in the text refers to Spanda — the vibration of consciousness. The term Spanda is derived from the root '*spadi*' which is defined in this way in the *dhātupāṭha* which is traditionally quoted to define the meaning of the term Spanda. See e.g. SpPra, p. 84.

[22] Worth noting here is that in so far as Unmanā is equivalent to Spanda, according to the SvT the supreme level which is immobile (*avicala*) and Non-being is beyond Spanda — a view which Spanda doctrine naturally rejects.

[23] SvT, 4/292b-3.

[24] Ibid., 4/294-5.

[25] For the numerous quotations from the *Tantrasadbhava* in Kashmiri Śaiva works refer to LĀS, vol. I p. 52-5, and LĀS, vol. II p. 61-4. Three MSs of this work have been located all of which are in Nepal and have been photographed by the Nepalese-German Manuscript preservation Project. These are: NAK MS No. 5/445 vi. Reel No. A 44/2 (186 folios); NAK MS No. 1/363 vi. Reel. No. A44/1 (140 folios) and NAK MS No.5/1985 Reel No. A 188/22-A 189/1 (132 folios). NAK MS., No. 1/363 vi. is the one to which the folio numbers refer.

the lengthy passage in the SvT from which we have drawn the above exposition, and concludes the description of the Voids with the remark that this is the doctrine of Voidness (*śúnyavāda*). It goes on to discuss the yogi who is "established in power" (*śaktistha*) thus continuing its exposition of the rise of Kuṇḍalinī. Kuṇḍalinī's rise liberates from the ignorance that consciousness is exclusively located in the physical body and so leads to the realization of the all-pervasive nature of the Self, a state technically termed *Ātmavyāpti*. This state spontaneously leads to the realization of Śiva's pervasive presence termed *Śivavyāpti* and the yogi established in Śakti is thus established in his authentic nature (*svabhāvastha*). This is a state beyond all states and levels including the contemplation of emptiness (*śūnyabhāva*) as well as Śiva and Śakti.[26] It is achieved by abandoning all dichotomizing thought processes (*vikalpa*), including the thought of liberation. The contrast felt to exist between bondage (*amokṣa*) and liberation is just a thought construct.

The notion of duality (*dvaitabhāva*), conceived spontaneously by the mind, causes limiting conditions to prosper. In order to achieve liberation the yogi must abandon all being (*bhāva*) by forsaking the notion of existence for it is that which generates phenomenal being.[27] Moreover, the yogi is to abandon all sense of personal existence along with that of everything else:

"The notion of self-existence (*mamatva*) should in every circumstance be abandoned; one should consider (only) that 'I am not'. One achieves nothing until one is not devoted to the activity of non-duality, namely, (the awareness that): 'I am not nor does anything else exist'." [28]

[26] Ibid., folio 15a.

[27] *astitvam iti ced bhāvas tadā vardho na saṁśayaḥ* | Ibid.

[28] *mamatvaṁ tyajya sarvatra nāham asmīti bhāvayet* ||
nāham asmi na cānyo 'sti advaitakriyayā rataḥ |
yāvan na vindate hy eva tāvat tasya na kiñcana|| Ibid folio 16b.

In the context of his exposition of Kaula ritual intercourse, Abhinavagupta refers to an unnamed Āgamic source quoted by Jayaratha in full which says: "I am not nor does anything else exist except the powers' — he who contemplates this innate (*sahaja*) state of repose for even an instant becomes a Wanderer in the Sky of Consciousness (*Khecara*) and achieves union with the yoginī." TĀ Xlb, p.45. The same phrase: *nāham asmi na canyo 'sti* is also found in NT 3/13.

Initiation, meditation, the recitation of mantra or any other spiritual exercise cannot lead to the understanding of ultimate reality, which is free of all objectively distinguishable characteristics (*alakṣya*). Their purpose is merely to still the fickle mind. In order to move out of the fettered condition of Being we must move beyond it into Non-being.

"This (spiritual discipline) which is an aggregate of thought-constructs is (O goddess!) the cause of Your awakening that is non-dual, free of thought, senses, mind and (all) distinguishing characteristics. How can that which is not (objectively) distinguishable have (any) characteristics? How can that which is beyond mind possess a mind? The wise should (therefore) establish themselves in that which is free of mind (*amanas*). Non-being (*nāstikya*) abides eternally; thus, abandon being. Non-existence is liberation, the great prosperity, (therefore) contemplate that all things are void. (All things) are as perishable as a pot (and fleeting) as the sight of a lightning flash, therefore fix your mind on Non-existence (*nāstikya*) the nature of which is (universal) annihilation consisting of the abandonment of all things." [29]

The aim is to realize the Equality (*samatva*) present in all things. This is done by first abandoning all existent things and states of being (*bhāva*). The mind thus freed of thought-constructs is established in Non-being (*abhāva*). This is not, however, the end of the path. The yogi must also abandon Non-being and become established in the authentic Being which is his true nature (*svabhāva*). In this way the mind (*manobindu*) disappears instantly like a drop in a mass of water.[30] Thus the yogi is to abandon attachment both to the world of thought and sensations as well as to the tranquil (*śānta*) state of Non-being to enter the supreme abode that, free of the subject who impels and the object of impulse, is beyond the contemplation of Non-being (*abhāvabhāvanātīta*).[31]

[29] *etat saṁkalpasaṁghātaṁ tava saṁbodhakāraṇam |*
advaitanirvikalpan tu nirindriyam alakṣaṇam ||
alakṣasya kuto lakṣo amanasya kuto manaḥ |
amane pratyavasthāmaṁ kartavyaṁ satataṁ budhaiḥ ||
nāstitvaṁ vartate nityam astitvan tu parityajet |
nāstitvaṁ mokṣo mahāvardhaḥ sarvaśúnyeva bhāvayet ||
ghaṭavad bhaṅgurākāraṁ vidyuddarśanasannibham |
sarvatyajyamaye 'kṣaye nāstikye tu manaṁ kuru || *Tantrasadbhāva*, folio 16a

[30] ibid., folio 15a.

[31] *abhāvabhāvanātítaṁ codyacodokavarjitam |* Ibid. folio 18a.

The expression *abhāvabhāvanā* — 'the contemplation of Non-being' — referring to a state of contemplative observation (*samādhi*) in which all sensory and mental activity ceases, is very significant for our study. Kallaṭa makes use of it as do all the other commentators on the *Spandakārikā*, thus leaving us in no doubt that this is a standard technical term. This contemplative state is not considered to be ultimate in the *Tantrasadbhāva* which represents, one could say, an advance on the SvT which prefers to characterize the transcendental aspect of pure Being as Non-being, instead of understanding being and non-being as relative concepts and going beyond them. Even so, according to the *Tantrasadbhāva* the contemplation of Non-being does ultimately lead to the highest realization. The *Spandakārikā* and its commentators, for their part, deny that it is of any value at all. Thus Kṣemarāja maintains that whether Being or Non-being is taken as the support of meditation when contemplation reaches perfection they are both realized to be merely conceptual representations and so, he says, the contemplation of Non-being as the eradication of all things can never lead to the realization of the supreme reality (*paramārtha*).[32]

Even so, perhaps, these authors would not have objected as much if it was in this alone that the doctrine of Non-being consisted. The earliest Spanda authors were more likely to have been objecting to the kind of doctrine taught in the *Jñānatilaka* to which we now turn. Although manuscripts of this work are rare and it does not seem to have been of any great importance, the *Jñānatilaka* is notable for its theistic nihilism. The sole copy of this text I have managed to trace is a Nepalese palm-leaf manuscript written in a form of Newari script that is not younger than the 13th century thus setting the upper limit for the date of this text.[33] A reference to the Siddhānta along with the

[32] SpNir, p.71.

[33] There are a number of texts called *Jñānatilaka* at least two of which are Buddhist and Jaina works (see NCC VII p. 32-4). There are also a number of Hindu Texts which go by this name. One of these, set in the form of a dialogue between Nārada and Viṣṇu, is preserved in a Nepalese MS (See Nepal cat. I, p. 180. This is NAK MS no. 1/1340 NGMPP, reel no. A 88/20, length 6 folios. Also reels No. A 90/8 and B 113/13). Another is a Tantra in which Umā and Maheśvara converse. The text that concerns us here is preserved in two fragments of a Nepalese MS kept at the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Vedas and Vedānta as useless for those who are spiritually ignorant [34] may perhaps be taken as an indication that it is not a Siddhānta text. The strong emphasis it places on yoga — particularly attention to the movement of the breath and control of the senses and mind coupled with the recitation of the mantra *oṁ namaḥ śivāya* justifies its characterization simply as a short tract on Śaiva yoga with no specific affiliations.

We turn now to a brief exposition of the relevant portions of this text which concern the doctrine of Non-being.

In chapter V, Śiva explains to Kārttikeya the doctrine of Non-being, which He calls the Great Jewel (*mahāratna*) knowing which all people attain liberation, and says:

"Those who possess the contemplation of Non-being (*abhāvabhāvanā*) and their consciousness is established in Non-being are, by realizing the principle (*tattva*) of Non-being, liberated: there can be no doubt about this. Those best of men who have realized the union (*saṁghāṭa*) which is attained by Non-being cross over Mahāmāyā, the ocean of phenomenal existence though it is so hard to traverse. Nor are those great-souled ones who have entered the pure water of Non-being burnt by the terrible fire of transmigration though it be intense. Māyā, the snake of phenomenal existence (*bhava*), angry and with long fangs, hard to overcome, whose form is crooked, can do nothing to those who contemplate Non-being. Mahāmāyā, the demon of *saṁsāra*, whose tongue is greed, is averse to those who are devoted to union with the Void." [35]

Although numbered separately they certainly belong to the same MS. MS No. 9991 consists of only three folios of palm-leaf marked 2, 9 and 10 and contains about thirty verses of the text. Folio 9b contains the colophon of the third chapter. MS no. 10742 is also written in Kuṭila characters and the folios are marked 11-24. The text is set in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and his son Kārttikeya and extends from the middle of the fourth paṭala to the end of the eighth where it ends abruptly. The colophon of the seventh chapter calls the work *Kālajñānatilaka*. Another MS of this work may be preserved with the manuscript library at Baroda and is numbered 3525 (see TāSā, p. 220 and LĀS II p.35). A text with this name is quoted in the *Śataratna-saṁgraha* p.70; these verses have not been traced in this MS.

[34] ibid., fl. 22b.

[35] Ibid., fl. 13a.

Śiva goes on to say that Non-being is the pure lamp and Great Jewel, holding which man can wander confidently in the darkness of delusion. The vision of knowledge both superior and inferior becomes pure in one in whose mind shines the sun of Non-being. The Flame of the fire of Non-being is most terrible. It burns the forest of the darkness of ignorance which, once it has been burnt down, allows man to wander in this world freely (*svacchanda*). Those whose consciousness is established in Non-being do not fall into the frightening well of delusion whose waters are sorrow and pain. Safe in the fort of Non-being, knowing the field (*viṣaya*) of Non-being they are untouched by delusion. Repeating mantras, making offerings to the fire and the like are useless. One should instead take refuge in the plane of Non-being. He achieves all things who is established on the plane of Non-being (*abhāvapāda*) and delights in savouring bliss.

All the universe is born of Non-being for it is none other than Śiva Himself beyond the qualities and stainless.[36] Śiva proclaims that:

"Non-being is the supreme God. Non-being is the supreme Śiva. Non-being is supreme knowledge. Non-being is the supreme path. All being is Non-being. Non-being is all the gods. Non-being is eternal and all-pervasive.

"(All things) merge into Non-being and from Non-being arise again. What is the point of speaking much, O Mahāsena; there is nothing higher than Non-being — liberation is in the hands of those who contemplate Non-being (*abhāvabhāvīnām*). Those who have a support (*sālamba*) in phenomenal existence are never freed. Therefore one should contemplate that which is free of support, namely, the stainless plane of the Void. The concentration (*dhāraṇā*) 'with support' is transitory, fickle and gross and so should be abandoned. He whose mind is established even for a moment in the state of emptiness is freed of Dharma and Adharma and is liberated from the body."[37]

In chapter VI, Śiva goes on extolling Non-being. It is the endless, omnipresent Great Ocean of consciousness, the Tranquil

[36] *abhāvaṁ śivam ity uktam guṇātītaṁ nirañjanam* (Ibid. folio 14a).
Also: *abhāva śiva ityukta abhāvam paramam padam* | (Ibid.14b).

[37] Fl. 14b.

(*śānta*), knowing which man is liberated. The yogi can see this omnipresent Jewel with the eye of knowledge (*vijñānalocana*). It has no beginning, middle or end. It is infinite and infinite is its splendour (*tejas*). It has no beginning, middle or end. It is the Self, the supreme Śiva, and teacher of the universe as well as its foundation (*ādhāra*). One who perceives this principle directly (*pratyakṣa*) is never burnt by the fire of time. In the body it is differentiated (*sakalā*), beyond it is undifferentiated (*niṣkalā*). It is a state of compactness (*ghanāvasthā*) and is all states. The vital breath (*prāṇa*) by nature, it is splendour, stable (*dharaṇa*) and pervasive. It can be seen when the yogi is free of thought-constructs (*nirvikalpa*) as the subject (*mātṛ*) and essence of consciousness (*vijñānasadbhāva*). Man is liberated when the mind (*citta*) is established in this omnipresent reality that is tranquil (*śānta*) and free of all being (*bhāva*). The mind that is unsupported is absorbed in the absence of being. Liberated, he enjoys eternal, unobstructed and uninterrupted bliss (*sukha*).

In Chapter VIII Śiva explains that the yogi should contemplate his own Self within the body as being in a state of emptiness (*śūnyāvasthā*) for once he has realized this in his own body he realizes that all this universe is empty (*śūnya*). Thus those whose minds are stable think nothing. The yogi should not direct his attention anywhere, whether above, below in front or behind. Depositing his own nature (*svarūpa*) on the lower plane and abandoning all existent things (*bhāva*) he should think of nothing. He should observe that everything is merged in all things and having seen the Self of that which pervades everything he should think of nothing. In this way beholding the waveless (*nistaraṅga*) Self, meditation and the object of meditation come to an end. Once one has heard and seen the omnipresent Śiva, the object of sight and hearing cease to exist. Entering the immobile place, the stainless abode of the Void, the yogi should think of naught. Just as in the middle of the ocean one sees nothing but water, in the peaceful ocean of consciousness one sees nothing but consciousness within and outside all living beings. Although it is the nature of the mind to wander, once one has known this were can it go? Thus the mind of one who sees consciousness constantly within himself is well fixed.

The wise man who is intent on contemplating Non-being (*bhāva*) has no need of any other practice. He, the best of yogis, who is established on the plane of Non-being, enjoys the Three Worlds along with Śiva. This is the knowledge of the state of emptiness (*śūnyāvasthā*). A yogi in this state is not affected by virtue or vice. He has no concern with what he should or what he should not eat. Like the rays of the sun in the sky he never moves.

Concluding Remarks

The *Jñānatilaka's* exposition of the doctrine of Non-being agrees well in many respects with that of the SvT and the other sources we have examined. The main points to note is the identification of the supreme principle with Śiva who is Non-being. This is the state of emptiness (*śūnyāvasthā*) which the yogi attains when he has freed himself of all discursive thought. In order to realize this he must practise the contemplation of Non-being (*abhāvabhavanā*). Although the *Jñānatilaka* identifies the liberated condition realized by this practice with a positive state of bliss and Non-being as pure, pervasive consciousness, it is quite understandable how this can be understood in negative terms. The *Spandakārikā* also stress that all thought-constructs and notions (*pratyaya*) of a discursive order involving a personal referent ('I am happy' or 'I am sad' etc.) must be overcome to reveal one's own authentic nature (*svasvabhāva*). This state of realization, however, is a state of consciousness which, although beyond all other states, pervades them. As one's own nature (*svabhāva*), it is a unique personal state of being (*svasvabhāva*) possessing both agency (*kartṛtva*) and cognizing subjectivity (*jnātṛtva*) as its inherent qualities (*akritṛmadharma*). It is this, according to the Spanda teachings, that is Śiva's nature and not the emptiness of the absence of Being.

~3~

THE SAṂVITPRAKĀŚA

The Light of Consciousness

The Text and its name

The *Saṁvitprakāśa* by Vāmanadatta is a theological-cum-philosophical tract of medium length, the first section of which is framed in the form of a prayer addressed to Viṣṇu, variously called Hari, Mādhava, Vāsudeva and Acyuta. What makes this text particularly interesting and important is not only the fine style in which it is written and the depth of its contents, but the fact that it appears to represent a genre of Vaiṣṇava monism the existence of which is virtually unknown. Although a Vaiṣṇava text, the idealist monism it presents is in many respects parallel to its Kashmiri Śaiva equivalents. One could go so far as to say that just as we refer to the Śaiva monism that developed in Kashmir between the 9th and 11th centuries as Kashmiri Śaivism, we can analogously refer to the system expounded in this text, which was written in Kashmir during the same period, as a form of Kashmiri Vaiṣṇavism. The similarities in style and conception between the *Saṁvitprakāśa* and Kashmiri Śaiva literature in general makes this work an object of study for the modern scholar of Kashmiri Śaivism just as it was for Kashmiri Śaivites in the past. Thus, prior to its recovery in manuscript, we knew of the existence of the *Saṁvitprakāśa* almost exclusively through quotation in Kashmiri Śaiva sources,[1] where references appear alongside those drawn from Śaiva works with no incongruity.

We have called the text *Saṁvitprakāśa* and this is the name by which it was generally known to Kashmiri Śaivites, although it is

[1] Dvivedi notes that Vāmanadatta's *Saṁvitprakāśa* is mentioned by Devarāja, a commentator on the *Nighaṇṭu* LĀS, II p, 73 with reference to Aufrecht, I p. 681.

also occasionally referred to by other names. Bhagavadutpala calls it the '*Stuti*',[2] '*Ātmasaptati*'[3] and '*Saṁvitprakaraṇa*'[4] in three single instances. These names seem to be derived from those of the sections into which the text is divided. In the two available manuscripts, there are seven sections called '*prakaraṇa*'. In one of the manuscripts, the number of verses of each section is noted by the scribe at the end of each one. They are:

	Reported length	*Actual length*
1) *Saṁvitprakāśa*	160	137.5
2) *Ātmasaptati*	59	59
3) *Vikalpaviplava*	61	59
4) *Vidyāviveka*	—	98
5) *Varṇavikāra*	52	52
6) *Parmārthaprakāśa*	22	27
7) ?	—	?

As the colophons do not mention the name of the text and neither does the author who refers to it simply as 'the work' (*kṛti*), one might be tempted to suggest that '*Saṁvitprakāśa*' is not the real title of all the text but just of the first chapter. That this may be the case seems to be supported by the name '*Saṁvitprakaraṇa*' given as that of the source of a quote drawn from out text. As this reference is drawn from the first section it appears that in this case the name of the section of the text from which the reference is drawn is presented as if it were that of the whole text. That this happens is confirmed by the introduction of one reference as being from the '*Ātmasaptati*' which is, in fact, drawn from the second section which goes by this name. But that this principle is not uniformly applied is evidenced by

[2] SpPra, p. 97.

[3] Ibid., p. 88. The printed edition introduces this quote from the *Saṁvitprakāśa* as belonging to the *Ātmasaptati*. Bhagavadutpala quotes from a *Svātmasaptati* (ibid., p.112) but this reference cannot be traced in the manuscripts of the *Saṁvitprakāśa* indicating either that this was a different text or that this verse was drawn from a missing portion of our text.

[4] Ibid., p. 112

the existence of one reference drawn from the first section that is said to be from the '*Stuti*'. Although the first section is indeed written in the style of a philosophical hymn addressed to Viṣṇu, the word '*stuti*' appears in the title of the second section. Anyway, that '*Saṁvitprakāśa*' is not just the name of the first section but of all the text is confirmed by the fact that this is how the source is named even when other sections apart from the first are quoted. Even so, insofar as by far the greater majority of references are drawn from the first section, the name *Saṁvitprakāśa* frequently refers equally to both the text as a whole and a section of it.

Vāmanadatta, the Author of the Saṁvitprakāśa

Kashmiri Śaiva authors refer to the writer of the *Saṁvitprakāśa* as Vāmanadatta.[5] He himself confirms that this is his name in the concluding verses of each section.[6] He also says that he was born a Brahmin in Kashmir and that he belonged to the Ekāyana.[7] In this way he tells us that he was a Pāñcarātrin for it is to the Ekāyana that the Pāñcarātra affiliates itself. Thus Rāmānuja's teacher, Yamunācārya, who lived in South India about the middle of the tenth century wrote a work, now lost, called the *Kāśmīrāgamaprāmāṇya*. There he is said to have sought to establish the revealed character (*apauruṣeyatva*) of the Ekāyana branch of the white *Yajurveda* which Pāñcarātrins claim is the original source of their Āgamic literature.[8] The Pāñcarātra tradition considers the Ekāyanaveda to be a 'secret tradition' (*rahasyāmnāya*).[9]

[5] Jayaratha, for example, commenting on TĀ, 5/154cd-5ab writes:
गुरुभिः वामनदत्ताचार्येण भाषितमिति संवित्प्रकाशे।

[6] कृतिर्वामनदत्तस्य सेयं भगवदाश्रया SP, 1/138
Cf. ibid. 2/61, 3/60, 4/98 and 5/52

[7] एकायने प्रसूतस्य कश्मीरेषु द्विजात्मनः। Ibid., 1/137

[8] Vedānta Deśika writes:
यथा चैकायनशाखायामपौरुषेयत्वं तथा काश्मीरागमप्रामाण्य एवं प्रपञ्चितमिति नेह प्रस्तूयते।
Pañcaratnarakṣā, Vedāntadeśikagranthamālā edited by Annangaracarya, p. 95; Vedāntadeśika repeats this statement in his *Nyāyapariśuddhi*, p. 168. See M. Narasimhacharya *Contributions of Yamuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Madras: M. Rangacharya Memorial Trust, 1971 p. 12.

[9] आद्यमेकायनं वेदं रहस्याम्नायसंज्ञितम्। *Īśvarasaṁhitā*, 21/531.

But even so, the dominant feature of the Ekāyana is traditionally said by Pāñcarātrins to be its Vedic character which thus establishes the authority of the Pāñcarātra and its sacred literature. Revealed, according to the *Īśvarasaṁhitā*, to Śāṇḍilya at the beginning of Kaliyuga by Saṁkarṣaṇa, it is described as the Ekāyana Veda, being the one path to liberation. The word 'Ekāyana' appears already in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* as the name of a 'fifth Veda' thus indicating the antiquity of early, possibly Vaiṣṇava, groups that referred to their scriptures in these terms.[10] At any rate, the point is that the term 'Ekāyana' is extensively found in Pāñcarātra literature as a way of referring to the Pāñcarātra and its scriptures as affiliated to the Veda. Indeed, according to these sources, the Ekāyana is not just a part of the Veda but the "very root of the tree of the Veda",[11] that "stands at the head of the Vedas".[12] Quite in keeping with Vāmanadatta's affirmation of his Ekāyana affiliations, the text confirms his thoroughgoing Vaiṣṇavism and his incorporation of Pāñcarātra concepts in places confirms his Pāñcarātra associations.[13]

All we know about Vāmanadatta is what he himself tells us in this, his only recovered work. He says that his mother was called Ratnādevī and that his father was Devadatta, the son of Rātradatti.[14]

[10] ऋग्वेदं भगवोऽध्येमि यजुर्वेदं सामवेदार्थवणं... वाकोवाक्यमेकायनम्।
Chāndogyopaniṣad, 7/1/2.

[11] आदिष्टोऽहं भगवता भवदर्थे तपोनिधे ।
इत्युक्त्वाध्यापयामास वेदमेकायनाभिधम् ।।
मूलभूतस्तु महतो वेदवृक्षस्य यो महान् ।
सद्ब्रह्म वासुदेवाख्यं परतत्त्वैकसंश्रयम् ।।
Parameśvarasaṁhitā, jñānapada, 1/32-3.

[12] *Praśnasaṁhitā*, 2/38-9. For this and other references, see V. Krishnamacharya's Sanskrit introduction to the *Lakṣmītantra*, Adyar Library Series No. 87. Adyar, Madras 1975, p.4-7. Also the Sanskrit introduction to the *Paramasaṁhitā*, Gaekward's Oriental Series No. 86, Baroda, 1940, p. 29-33.

[13] See below, p. 29.

[14] रात्रदत्तर्देवदत्तो रत्नादेव्यां यदात्मजम्।
लेभे वामनदत्ताख्यं तत्स्तुत्या प्रीयते हरिः।।
SP, 1/135cd-6ab.

He also refers to his daughter Vāmadevī who wrote a hymn to Viṣṇu, possibly called *Haristuti*.[15] We must therefore distinguish this Vāmanadatta from the Vāmanānātha, also known as Śrīvāmana and Hrasvanātha, who wrote the (A) *Dvayasampatti*, as the latter was not the son of Devadatta but of Harṣadatta.[16] Anyway, this text, which seems to have originally been a commentary on the *Vijñānabhairava* or, at any rate dedicates space to commenting on a verse from it, is entirely Śaiva. Similar considerations cast doubt on the identity of our Vāmanadatta with the author of the *Svabodhodayamañjarī*. The author of this short but interesting yogic tract, cast in the style of the *Vijnāñabhairava*,[17] identifies himself as Vāmanadatta, the son of

[15] तथाद्युक्तं पद्दुहित्र्या वामदेव्या हरिस्तुतौ।। SP, 4/78cd.

[16] Śivopādhyāya writes: द्वयसम्पत्तिकारस्तु वामननाथो... VB, p. 78 and:
श्रीहस्वनाथेन हर्षदत्तसूनुनापि... इत्यादिनाद्वयसम्पतौ ibid., p. 90.
Abhinava confirms the authorship of this work in the PTv, p. 198.
एष एव श्रीवामनविरचिते द्वयसम्पत्तिवार्तिके उपदेशनयो बोधव्यः।।

These references do not allow us to determine whether the name of this text was *Dvayasampatti* or *Adyavasampatti*. Maybe Abhinava is refering to a second text which was a commentary (*vārtika*) of the (A) *Dvayasampatti*, but it seems more likely to me that that was the original title of this work and that it was indeed a commentary. The lengthy quote in VB, p. 78-9 certainly reads like a commentary on verse 90 of the *Vijñānabhairava*. *Bodhavilāsa* seems to have been another name of this work. One manuscript (No. C4719) is deposited in the Central Library in Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, and is listed as being by the son of Harṣadatta. Rastogi (*The Krama Tantricism of Kashmir*. Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi 1979, p. 182) notes the existence of a śāradā manuscript in Poona (BORI No. 472 of 1875-6) of the same work. The colophon reads:

ढाकदेशसमुद्भूतो मीमांसावनकेसरी।
हर्षदत्तेति नाम्ना तु तस्य सूनोरियं कृतिः।।

[17] The *Svabodhodayamañjarī* is quoted in SpPra, p. 126 and in TĀ, vol. II, p. 4. A number of manuscripts of this text are available under various names including *Svabodhamañjarī* and *Subodhamañjarī*. Two manuscripts are deposited in the Central Library in BHU, numbered C 4255 and CIOO. This text, which is well worth editing, is typical of a class of short tracts dealing with monistic Yoga of the type found in the *Vijñānabhairava*. Another such text is the *Nirvāṇayogottara* quoted by Yogarāja in his commentary on the *Paramārthasāra* (p. 160), a manuscript of which is deposited in the Central Library in B.H.U. (No. C4246).

Harṣadatta.[18] Thus there can be no doubt that there were at least two Vāmanadatta's known to Kashmiri Śaiva authors by Abhinavagupta's time.

Again, Yogarāja quotes Vīravāmaka as saying: "We worship (the deity) incessantly by means of the transcendental fire sacrifice in which the fuel is the forest of duality and death itself the human victim (*mahāpaśu*)."[19]

This verse cannot be traced in the manuscripts of the *Saṁvitprakāśa*, but they are incomplete. It could, anyway, have been drawn from another work by our Vāmanadatta. However, this does not seem very likely in so far as the form of the "transcendental fire sacrifice" is drawn from a model that is clearly more Śaiva than Vaiṣṇava. The word '*vīra*' in the author's name lends further weight to the view that this verse is drawn from a work written by a Śaiva, rather than a Vaiṣṇava, author. Thus, it is not at all certain whether Vīravāmanaka and our Vāmanadatta were the same person. The same uncertainty prevails concerning Abhinavagupta's reference to a Vāmanaka as one of his teachers in the *Tantrāloka*.[20] Although Abhinavagupta does refer to Vāmanadatta with respect in one place as 'guru', he may simply mean that he was one of his venerable predecessors or elder contemporaries rather than literally his teacher. However, even though Abhinavagupta was averse to Vaiṣṇavas, as are Śaivites in general, he was prepared to concede that the views of others were valuable even if they taught what he considered to be lower doctrines. Thus he writes that: "I myself, for this very reason, have frequented, moved by curiosity for lower doctrines and scriptures, masters of all sorts, logicians, Vedic scholars, Buddhists, Jainas and Vaiṣṇavas etc..."[21] Perhaps Vāmanadatta was one of these Vaiṣṇava teachers to whom Abhinavagupta refers. If so, Vāmanadatta was his elder contemporary, thus placing him in the beginning of the eleventh century. Again,

[18] The colophon of B.H.U. manuscript No. C4255 reads:
मीमांसावरसिंहश्च (स्य) हर्षदत्तस्य सुनूना।
कृता वामनदत्तेन स्वबोधोदयमञ्जरी।।

[19] PS, p. 146 quoted below, p. 36.

[20] आह अन्येऽपि धर्मशिववामनकोद्भटश्रीभूतेशभास्करमुखप्रमुखा महान्तः।। TĀ, 37/62.

[21] TĀ, 13/345b-346a.

Bhagavadutpala quotes Vāmanadatta frequently and, although his date is uncertain, we can be sure that he was not prior to Utpaladeva, Abhinava's grand-teacher, as he also quotes from his *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* in a number of places.[22] But, although we can thus be sure that Vāmanadatta was not later than Abhinavagupta, there is no certain evidence available at present to establish a minimum date for him. Even so, it seems to me that Vāmanadatta was probably either an elder contemporary of Abhinavagupta or belonged to the generation just preceding him. Vāmanadatta's use of Pratyabhijñā analogies (especially photic) and phenomenological idealism modelled on perception suggests that he postdates Utpaladeva. But the absence of a concept of an absolute ego and no identification of the supreme level of speech with the reflective awareness (*vimarśa*) of this ego goes against this view. Could Vāmanadatta represent a point of transition, albeit Vaiṣṇava, between the idealistic monism of Somānanda and the phenomenological monism of his disciple Utpaladeva? At any rate, there is no reason to doubt that Vāmanadatta lived and wrote in Kashmir sometime between the 9th and 11th century, that is, during the period of Kashmiri Śaivism's most vigorous growth. This was a period during which such a large number of Kashmiri scholars and religious men turned their attention to writing and teaching that in many cases it is hard to decide who preceded whom and indeed, many were contemporaries of different ages. The style and content of Vāmanadatta's work is in itself eloquent testimony to his belonging to this rich period of India's religious history.

The Vaiṣṇava Monism of the Saṁvitprakāśa

Saṁvitprakāśa — the light of consciousness — the title of the first chapter, coincides as we have seen with the name of the entire text. In fact, the symbolic notion of consciousness as luminous is indeed one of the major themes of the text as a whole and of the first chapter in particular. Vāmanadatta, like the Pratyabhijñā philosopher, Utpaladeva, makes extensive use of this analogy thus imparting a Pratyabhijñā-like tone to his mode of discourse. This feature markedly distinguishes Vāmanadatta's work from another monistic Vaiṣṇava tract that has come down to us and that we know was studied in 10th

[22] The *Īśvarapratyabhijñā* is quoted in SpPra, p. 84, 87 and 124.

century Kashmir, namely, the *Paramārthasāra,* also known as the *Ādhārakārikā* written by Patañjali, alias Śeṣa, traditionally identified (certainly mistakenly) with the author(s) of the *Mahābhāṣya* commentary on Pāṇini's grammar and the *Aphorisms on Yoga.* Thus, although the philosophical perspective of the *Paramārthasāra* is monistic, conceiving the one ultimate reality to be Viṣṇu who is pure consciousness, just as Vāmanadatta does, photic analogies are virtually absent.[23] This divergence is emblematic of the divergent approach the two authors adopt to establish their monism and the aspect of the unity of reality upon which they have chosen to fix their attention. Ādiśesa's work reads much like a short treatise on Advaita Vedānta; indeed the author is represented as one who "knows the Veda and its limbs" and as "having seen all the Vedāntaśāstra", on the basis of which he wrote his work.[24] Instead of the neuter Brahman, however, we find Viṣṇu who is represented as the supreme soul (*paramātman*),[25]

[23] The only verse in the *Ādhārakārika* in which ultimate reality is clearly understood as light is the following:

विगतोपाधिः स्फटिकः स्वप्रभया भाति निर्मलो यद्वत्। ĀK, 60. Cf. Ibid., 23.
चिद्दीपः स्वप्रभया तथा विभातीह निरुपाधिः।।

Just as a crystal free of adjuncts shines without stain by its own light, similarly, the lamp of consciousness shines here (in this world) without adjuncts by its own light.

In another place the Self is compared to the sun, but only secondarily:

यद्वत् सवित्र्युदिते करोति कर्माणि जीवलोकोऽयम्।
न च तानि करोति रविर्न कारयति तद्वदात्मापि।। Ibid., 13.

Just as this world of living beings engages in action (*karman*) when the sun rises, (although) the sun neither acts nor causes (others) to act, such is the case with the Self also.

[24] त्वं साङ्गवेदवेत्ता ... You know the Veda with (its) limbs. Ibid., 4, also:

वेदान्तशास्त्रमखिलं विलोक्य शेषस्तु जगदाधारः।
आर्यापञ्चाशीत्या बबन्ध परमार्थसारमिदम्।। Ibid., 87.

Having surveyed all the scriptures of the Veda and Vedānta, Śeṣa, the sustainer of the universe composed this *Paramārthasāra* in fifty (verses set in) *āryā* (metre).

[25] परं परस्याः प्रकृतेरनादिमेकं निविष्टं बहुधा गुहासु।
सर्वालयं सर्वचराचरस्थं त्वामेव विष्णुं शरणं प्रपद्ये।। Ibid., 1.

but even though he is characterized as the "cause of creation, persistence and destruction"[26] the universe is Viṣṇu's Māyā which is unreal. Clearly, there is a palpable contradiction here; even so, Ādiśeṣa remains true to his Vaiṣṇava creed and so refuses to take recourse to Advaita Vedānta's solution to this problem by making a distinction between the pure absolute — Brahman — which is eternally just as it is, unrelated to diversity in any way except as the reality behind an illusion, and the personal God — *Īśvara* — who creates, sustains and destroys all things that, like the world he seemingly creates, is real only to the extent that he is the Brahman that appears to be him. Thus Ādiśeṣa makes free use of the entire gamout of standard analogies to explain in what sense Viṣṇu's Māyā is just an unreal illusion: it is like the water in a mirage (*mṛgatṛṣṇikā*), the silver seen in nacre, the snake in the rope, the two moons mistakenly perceived by someone with an eye disease.[27] The specific character of individual things that appear to exist in the illusory world of Māyā is similarly explained by taking recourse to the standard Advaita notion of limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*)

I take refugue in you alone, Viṣṇu, who are present in all that is mobile and immobile and the abode of all things. (You who are) one, without beginning and supreme, present in many ways in the cavities of the supreme *Prakṛti.*

[26] नारायणमात्मानं ज्ञात्वा सर्गस्थितिप्रलयहेतुम् ।
सर्वज्ञ: सर्वगत: सर्व: सर्वेश्वरो भवति ।। Ibid., 67.
Once the Self is known to be Nārāyaṇa, the cause of creation, persistence and destruction, (the liberated soul) is omniscient, omnipresent, all things and the lord of all.

[27] बुद्ध्वैवमसत्यमिदं विष्णोर्मायात्मकं जगद्रूपम।
विगतद्वन्द्वोपाधिकभोगासङ्गो भवेच्छान्त:।। Ibid., 74.
Once known that this, Viṣṇu's cosmic form, is unreal and illusory (*māyātmaka*), the one who is (thus) detatched and free of worldly experience (conditioned by) the limiting adjuncts of duality is (perfectly) tranquil.
मृगतृष्णायामुदकं शक्तौ रजतं भुजङ्गमो रज्वाम्।
तैमिरिकचन्द्रयुगवद् भ्रान्तं निखिलं जगद्रूपम्।। Ibid., 22.
(Like) water in a mirage, silver in nacre, the snake in a rope and the pair of moons (mistakenly perceived) by one with a cataract, the entire cosmic form (of Viṣṇu) is an illusion.

produced by ignorance. The analogy is also the well known Advaita one of the sun that shines reflected in different pools of water — just so, the Supreme Self appears diversified in the things of the world, established as it is in all the limiting conditions that delineate apparently existing objects.[28] Consequently, even though Viṣṇu is said to be creator, Ādiśeṣa declares that: "Just as there is no cause of the creation and destruction of the snake (mistakenly perceived) in the rope, so too there is no cause here of the arising and destruction of the universe."[29] Thus, just as at the cosmic level the ultimate principle does nothing, so too at the individual level, the Self, like the Sāṁkhyan *Puruṣa*, is perfectly inactive. We can contrast this view with that presented by Abhinava in his Śaiva adaptation of this text.[30] Abhinava agrees with Ādiśeṣa that the individual soul merges into the Brahman when he overcomes Māyā and that it consists essentially of thought constructs centred on duality.[31] Ādiśeṣa says that this takes place when the soul realizes that Viṣṇu's Māyā is insubstantial like the snow, foam or bubbles formed from water or the smoke that issues from a fire.[32]

[28] यद्वद् दिनकर एको विभाति सलिलाशयेषु सर्वेषु।
तद्वत् सकलोपाधिष्ववस्थितो भाति परमात्मा।।
Just as the one sun shines (reflected) in all pools of water, in the same way the supreme soul shines present within all the limiting adjuncts.

[29] रज्ज्वां भुजङ्गहेतुः प्रभवविनाशौ यथा न स्तः।
जगदुत्पत्तिविनाशौ न च कारणमस्ति तद्वदिह।। Ibid., 50.

[30] Abhinavagupta adapted the Vaiṣṇava *Paramārthasāra* to express the Śaiva position. For details see K.C. Pandey *Abhinavagupta*, Chowkhamba, Varanasi 1963, p. 63-7.

[31] इत्थं द्वैतविकल्पे गलिते प्रविलङ्घ्य च मोहनीं मायाम्।
सलिले सलिलं क्षीरे क्षीरमिव ब्रह्मणि लयी स्यात्।। PS, 51.
Once the notion of duality (*dvaitavikalpa*) has fallen away in this way and one has crossed over deluding Māyā, one merges in the Brahman — like water in water and milk in milk.

Note that in order to distinguish Abhinava's *Paramārthasāra* from that of Adiśeṣa, I call the latter *Ādhārakārikā* (ĀKā).

[32] हिमफेनबुद्बुदा इव जलस्य धूमो यथा बह्नेः।
तद्वत् स्वभावभूता मायैषा कीर्तिता विष्णोः।। ĀKā, 56.
This, Viṣṇu's Māyā which is praised as the essential nature (of manifestation), is like the snow, foam and bubbles of water and the smoke of fire.

The practitioner must constantly refresh this contemplative insight (*bhāvanā*), through it he is liberated by becoming one with the Brahman. According to Abhinava, however, contemplative insight (*bhāvanā*) into the nature of the principles of existence is the result of realizing one's own universal 'I' consciousness that is experienced not just as the one universal consciousness which is the passive ground of Being, but as supremely active. Thus he writes:

"I am the Lord who playfully propels the machine of the wheel of energies. My nature is pure and I hold the position of the Lord of the great wheel of energies. It is in me alone that all things manifest, as do jars and other (objects) in a clean mirror. Everything extends out of me as does the wonderful diversity of dreams from one who sleeps. I myself am all things (and they are related to me) like hands, feet and other (limbs are related to the) body. I alone manifest in all this like the light (that shines) in (all) existing things."[33]

While Abhinava affirms the activity of the Self which he understands to be not just a knower but also an agent, Ādiśeṣa categorically denies that the Self is active. Present in the body, the Self is the embodied soul (*dehin*); his presence stimulates the activity of the body, mind and senses, but he does nothing, just as the magnet that attracts iron to itself is inactive.[34] Thus:

[33] इति शक्तिचक्रयन्त्रं क्रीडायोगेन वाहयन् देवः।
अहमेव शुद्धरूपः शक्तिमहाचक्रनायकपदस्थः।।
मय्येव भाति विश्वं दर्पण इव निर्मले घटादीनि।
मत्तः प्रसरति सर्वं स्वप्नविचित्रत्वमिव सुप्तात्।।
अहमेव विश्वरूपः करचरणादिस्वभाव इव देहः।
सर्वस्मिन्नहमेव स्फुरामि भावेषु भास्वरूपमिव।। PS, 47-9.

[34] मायामयोऽप्यचेता गुणकरणगणः करोति कर्माणि।
तदधिष्ठाता देही सचेतनोऽपि न करोति किञ्चिदपि।।
यद्वदचेतनमपि सन् निकटस्थे भ्रामके भ्रमति लोहम्।
तद्वत्करणसमूहश्चेष्टति चिदधिष्ठिते देहे।। ĀKā, 11-12.

Even though insentient (*Prakṛti*) is Māyā, consisting of the aggregate of qualities and instruments (of knowledge and action), it acts (*karoti karmāṇi*). While the embodied soul, who presides over it, even though sentient, does nothing. Just as a nearby magnet moves iron even though it is insentient, similarly the (insentient) aggregate of senses operates in the body presided by consciousness.

"The embodied soul sees, hears, smells, touches, tastes and perceives, but insofar as he (as the Self is really) devoid of intellect, senses and body, he does nothing." [35]

Abhinava modifies this verse to fit his own view and places it at the conclusion of his previous statement concerning the experience of the Self's authentic nature as the agent of creation and destruction; thus his version reads:

"Even though the one who sees, hears and smells, being devoid of the senses and body does nothing, it is I alone who deploy the various reasonings of the philosophies and scriptures." [36]

According to Ādiśeṣa there is no agent because there is nothing in reality for him to act upon. Abhinava and Ādiśeṣa agree that the Lord is not affected by the troubles of the world; it is the deluded who are peaceful, happy or sad according to their state of mind.[37] The Self seems to act due to the activity of the mind and body, just as the sun reflected in running water seems to move. Again, although the Self is omnipresent, it is manifest in the intellect just as Rāhu becomes visible when he devours the moon during an eclipse.[38] Thus

[35] द्रष्टा श्रोता घ्राता स्पर्शयिता रसयिता ग्रहीता च।
देही देहेन्द्रियधीविवर्जितः स्यान्न कर्तासौ।। Ibid., 62.

[36] द्रष्टा श्रोता घ्राता देहेन्द्रियवर्जितोऽप्यकर्तापि।
सिद्धान्तागमतर्कांश्चचारहमेव रचयामि।। PS, 50.

[37] शान्त इव मनसि शान्ते हृष्ट इव मूढ इव मूढे।
व्यवहारस्थो न पुनः परमार्थत ईश्वरो भवति।। ĀKā, 34. Cf.
One who is immersed in the affairs of daily life is as if tranquil when the mind is tranquil, as if happy when (it) is happy, and as if deluded when (it) is deluded, whereas the Lord in reality is not.
शान्ते शान्त इवायं हृष्टे हृष्टो विमोहयति मूढः।
तत्तत्त्वगणे सति भगवान् न पुवः परमार्थतः स तथा।। PS, 38.
When (the mind हृष्टे हृष्टो विमोहयति मूढ if tranquil, and when it is happy he is happy, and it deludes the fool when your aggregate (of sense) is present, whereas God in reality is not such.

[38] गच्छति गच्छति सलिले दिनकरबिम्बं स्थिते स्थितिं याति।
अन्तःकरणे गच्छति गच्छत्यात्मापि तद्वदिह।।
राहुरदृश्योऽपि यथा शशिबिम्बस्थः प्रकाशते जगति।
सर्वगतोऽपि तथात्मा बुद्धिस्थो दृश्यतामेति।। ĀKā, 17-8. Cf., P.S. 7-8.

Ādiśeṣa's system tends towards a monism of the Advaita Vedānta type and develops the Sāṁkhya theme of *Puruṣa's* passivity with respect to *Prakṛti*, here identified with Māyā. The embodied soul does nothing, it is Māyā that acts. The Self seems to be an agent and enjoyer only because of its association with the body.

Now, even though Vāmanadatta agrees with Ādiśeṣa that there is only one reality and that it is pure consciousness which he praises devoutly as Viṣṇu, he sets off on a different tack to present and establish his monism. Like all monists, Vāmanadatta stresses in various ways the indeterminate nature of the one reality: it is not exclusively one or other of possible prototypical categories that characterize things such as subject and object, inner and outer etc., and it is beyond conceptualization and hence speech.[39] This implies, according to Vāmanadatta, that the duality verbal expression necessitates is not real but is merely a conceived idea,[40] thus, distinctions such as that between subject and object are false.[41] However, this does not mean that the world and those that perceive it are unreal illusions. The world of things cannot be based on their non-existence.[42] Vāmanadatta stresses that the appearance of an illusory snake would not be possible if there were no rope.[43] Māyā is not the illusory world, it is the false knowledge of ignorance which perceives duality in Viṣṇu who is one and non-dual. When this Māyā is destroyed one perceives ultimate reality as it is.[44] The world is not unreal; on the contrary, it is as real as Viṣṇu himself who, making it as he pleases, is one with it.[45] Thus, according to Vāmanadatta, the world is actually created, sustained and destroyed by Viṣṇu who, in doing so, forms himself into the universe — thus assuming his external form — to then revert to his own internal, undifferentiated nature when it is destroyed. Vāmanadatta thus develops a peculiar position of his own here. According to him, it is possible to explain the generation of the world both in terms of real and apparent change. The Advaita view maintains that the world is a product of a seeming change in the Brahman, like the apparent change that takes place when we perceive a rope mistakenly to be a snake. This view is sharply contrasted with the

[39] SP, 1/1-3.
[40] Ibid., 1/8.
[41] Ibid., 1/28.
[42] Ibid., 1/111b.
[43] Ibid., 1/100a.
[44] Ibid., 1/102b-3.
[45] Ibid., 1/99.

one that asserts that the Brahman changes into the universe by altering itself, like milk that becomes curd. Vāmanadatta accepts both as equally possible explanations:

"He whose unique nature is supremely pure consciousness alone assumes physical form. This can be explained both in terms of real and apparent change. (Explained as merely) apparent change, it is You, O Acyuta (who persist unchanged although) it appears to be otherwise. (And as a) real transformation, it is always You (who, although essentially the same, assume many forms) just as gold (fashioned into an) earring (remains gold)." [46]

Even so, Vāmanadatta stresses that subject/object distinctions are not ultimately real. It is the notion based on duality (*bhedasaṁkalpa*) that splits up the unity of consciousness into subject and object, inner and outer.[47] Both the condition of the subject and that the of object are states of Viṣṇu who is the one, pure consciousness, and so they are ultimately false in themselves.[48] It is only the foolish who, seeing the world of subjects and objects, believe that that is the way things are also within Viṣṇu,[49] whereas he is really beyond all phenomenal being and contamination by such relative distinctions. As Viṣṇu is the universal nature of all things — like the gold of gold ornaments — there can be no distinction within him.[50] There can be no time or space within him who is the one support of all and consists of all things, while at the same time transcending all particulars.[51]

Thus, Māyā is ignorance or false knowledge of duality. The way this false knowledge operates is through language, for that which is undivided within one's own consciousness appears to be fragmented when it reaches the plane of speech.[52] Duality is just the way we talk about things and hence think about them. The primary form of this duality is that between subject and object. But if we reflect upon this relation and what it entails we discover that it is not as it initially appears to be. Objectivity (*meyatva*), Vāmanadatta argues, amounts to a state of limitation and the exclusion of elements one from another (*pariccheda*), and this doesn't take place within consciousness

[46] Ibid., 1/104b-6a.
[47] Ibid., 1/1.
[48] Ibid., 1/28.
[49] Ibid., 1/51.
[50] Ibid.,1/109-11.
[51] Ibid., 1/62.
[52] Ibid., 2/19.

(*jñāna*),[53] which is not an object of knowledge, but is the prerequisite condition of all knowledge. Indeed it is this, the ultimate nature of the perceiving consciousness (*graha*) of both subject and object, that is real and persists when they cease: all else is false.[54] The notions that "this is other than me" and "I am different from that" run contrary to oneness and cannot persist even for an instant,[55] and they do not in fact do so because all thought is momentary. In reality cognitive consciousness (*jñāna*) shines by itself; it does not require any object.[56] The status of things as objects of knowledge is not due to some inherent attribute they possess of themselves, but is due to their relation to a perceiving subject, while the subjectivity (*mātṛtva*) in the perceiving subject has no existence apart from the object.[57] The establishment (*siddhi*) of truly existing things is independent (*anapekṣa*). There is neither subjectivity nor objectivity in those things that are independent.[58] Similarly, if it is impossible to conceive of knowledge with no field of application (*viṣaya*), it is also impossible for this field to exist without content (*viṣayin*).[59] The same argument holds good with relation to action (*karma*) and the agent. Action pertains to that which is made manifest by consciousness (*prakāśya*) but this can have no existence in the absence of an agent;[60] but as nothing is manifest but consciousness itself there can be no question of action or agency.

At the same time, however, Vāmanadatta affirms that Viṣṇu, the consciousness which is the one ultimate reality, is genuinely creative. The entire universe arises out of him [61] — and he precedes and supports all the business of daily life (*vyavahāra*), be it that of the body, speech or mind.[62] As consciousness, Viṣṇu is the unique cause of all things,[63] and nothing can act apart from him [64] — for all that is impelled to action in any way is ultimately impelled by consciousness, the one reality.[65] Thus what Vāmanadatta means when he says that "creation has no being (*sattā*): being pertains to consciousness" is not just that all this world of the fettered (*saṁsāra*) is merely an

[53] Ibid., 2/21.
[54] Ibid., 2/26.
[55] Ibid., 2/29.
[56] Ibid., 2/33.
[57] Ibid., 2/51.
[58] Ibid., 2/52.
[59] Ibid., 3/33.
[60] Ibid., 2/54.
[61] Ibid., 1/73.
[62] Ibid., 1/93.
[63] Ibid., 171.
[64] Ibid., 1/74.
[65] Ibid., 1/75.

imaginary notion (*vikalpa*),[66] but that, unlike consciousness which requires nothing, there is no phenomenal entity which just exists and is known as such in itself independently of consciousness.[67] It is this seeming independence which is false.[68]

Vāmanadatta thus accepts that the one reality is varied (*vicitra*). Unity is different from relative distinctions and duality (*bheda*); it is the whole of reality which is involved in it, not just one reality or existing things contrasted with another independent reality. Vāmanadatta explains all this by taking recourse to a common Pāñcarātra notion which understands Viṣṇu as four-fold (*cāturātman*) as himself and his emanations (*vyūha*). These four are equated with various quaternities of mutually dependent elements that represent phases or levels within the entire range or reality. These are variously defined in different contexts as:

1) Reality (*vastu*), phenomenal being (*bhāva*), determinate particulars (*artha*), and action (*kriyā*).[69]

2) The four levels of Speech: *Śānta, Paśyantī, Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī*.[70]

3) Subject (*pramātṛ*), object (*meya*), means of knowledge (*māna*) and veridical cognitive consciousness (*miti*).[71]

This way of understanding causality leaves Vāmanadatta free to talk about Viṣṇu's cosmically creative activity in terms which often remind us of Kashmiri Śaivism and that fits with a world view that generally characterize the monisms of Tantric systems as a whole as distinct from those developed from the Upaniṣads. This form of monism is formed by an identification of the opposites which simultaneously involves their transcendence. Reality is one because it includes everything. It is for this reason that it is free of duality. Oneness is not achieved merely by denying multiplicity as unreal from the perspective of a higher transcendental reality. In this way Viṣṇu is completely established in himself at all times, and yet generates and destroys the universe that arises from him and falls back into him like the ocean that is in itself waveless and yet generates waves.[72] Thus, requiring nothing outside himself, Viṣṇu is endowed with per-

[66] Ibid., 3/2.
[67] Ibid., 2/21.
[68] Ibid., 2/22.
[69] Ibid., 1/87.
[70] Ibid., 1/89.
[71] Ibid., 2/59.
[72] Ibid., 1/73.

fect creative freedom (*svātantrya*)[73] and so he unfolds everywhere,[74] while the arising and falling away of all things takes place in the Lord who is the center of all the daily dealings of life.[75] Thus although Viṣṇu is pure, uninterrupted consciousness, free of subject and object and the source from which consciousness arises,[76] the passivity of knowledge does not contradict the activity of action: they are ultimately one.[77] Viṣṇu is equally cause, effect and instrument, for he is all things.[78]

Oneness is thus established by establishing the ultimate identity of seemingly contrasting categories in Viṣṇu who is pure consciousness. Thus the absence of subject-object distinctions within Viṣṇu is due to their identity. It is not attributed to their fictitious character. Once the object is known as it truly is, it is realized to be consciousness.[79] Again, just as the object can never be independent of the knowledge of it,[80] so this knowledge is not different from the perceiving subjectivity.[81] Thus, everything is pervaded by consciousness and consumed by it just as fire burns and pervades fuel;[82] and so, as Viṣṇu is pure consciousness, he is all things.[83] But although Viṣṇu contains everything and is in everything,[84] he is not conditioned by the things conditioned by time, space and form because he is internal consciousness.

Now all this can be expressed simply and directly, as Vāmanadatta does, by representing Viṣṇu-consciousness, the one reality, as light. Although this is a metaphor in a sense, in another, absolute divine consciousness and the world manifested in and through it are literally the light of consciousness and this is the way it is experienced. This presentation of the one, absolute reality as light is well-know to Indian thought from very early times. It finds its classic expression in the following verse which appears in a number of Upaniṣads:

"The sun shines not there, nor moon and stars;
These lightnings shine not, much less this (earthly) fire!

[73] Ibid., 1/84.
[74] Ibid., 1/81.
[75] Ibid., 1/92.
[76] Ibid., 1/25.
[77] Ibid., 1/119.
[78] Ibid., 1/112-3.
[79] Ibid., 1/24.
[80] Ibid., 1/22.
[81] Ibid., 1/17.
[82] Ibid., 1/10.
[83] Ibid., 1/22.
[84] Ibid., 1/14.

After Him, as He shines, doth everything shine.
This whole world is illumined by His light."[85]

From this point of view all things can be classified into two basic types, namely, those things which illuminate (*prakāśaka*) and those which are illuminated (*prakāśya*). The illuminators are both the perceiving subjects and their activity through which the objects of illumination are known, made known and hence, from this idealist point of view, created. All these illuminating lights shine by virtue of Viṣṇu, the one light.[86] In this sense, Viṣṇu is always immediately apparent as all things, in the act of knowing them and as the knower. As the immediate appearance of things just as they are, that is, as the shining of the universal light, they reveal Viṣṇu's nature which is thus directly apparent (*prakaṭa*). The light of the sun illumines an object and so makes it apparent (*prakaṭa*), whereas before it was obscure (*aprakaṭa*) and hence unknown. But Viṣṇu is always apparent as all things. There is no need to find ways to make him evident, nor is there any need of proofs to establish his existence.[87] Thus, the light which is the illuminator (*prakāśaka*) is at the same time the object of illumination — without this compromising its essentially luminous nature as the pure presentation of things just as they are in the immediacy of their direct experience. Thus Vāmanadatta writes:

"None dispute that You (O Lord) are the essential nature of (all) things; it is not darkness (*aprakāśa*) that shines when (the light of consciousness) becomes the object of illumination."[88]

In this way Vāmanadatta accounts for unity as the identity of opposites understood as aspects of the same numinous reality, namely, the shining of the light of consciousness. But while the illuminator as light manifests the object and thus presents itself as the object's manifest appearance, it also transcends it:

"Just as these things are separate from the light of the sun and it is undivided, so are You separate from all these objects of Your illumination."[89]

[85] *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* 6/14. The same verse is also found in *Mundakopaniṣad* 2/2/10 and the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* 5/15; cf. also *Bhagavadgitā*, 15/6.

[86] SP, 1/37-8.

[87] Ibid., 1/12-3.

[88] Ibid., 1/12.

[89] Ibid., 1/36, cf. 1/69.

This verse illustrates Vāmanadatta's second approach to oneness, what might be called the 'logic of transcendence' in which the unity of the absolute is established as being beyond diversity. Viṣṇu, the one reality is unaffected by the diversity of things — he is unconditioned. Although present in that which has form and is determined by time and space, he is free of them.[90] But this is not because they are unreal or less then real in respect to Viṣṇu's reality: Viṣṇu is free of time, space and form because he encompasses everything; the universe is full of Viṣṇu and there is no state in which he is absent.[91] Thus Vāmanadatta's transcendental logic is soon transformed into a 'logic of immanence' in which the absolute is understood as one because it excludes nothing, rather than because it stands beyond the many phenomena subject to a conditioned, contingent state of existence.

But if all this is true and Viṣṇu is that same consciousness which is in every perceiving conscious being as its most essential nature, why are we not aware of this fact directly and so, being conscious of our ultimate identity with Viṣṇu, be in his same state? The answer, Vāmanadatta affirms, is to be found in the negative, privative character of thought (*vikalpa*). This is a theme Vāmanadatta develops extensively throughout the third *prakaraṇa* where he discusses the nature of thought and its formation through the power of Speech. The world of daily life is perceived through a veil of thought constructs which represent what is presented by the shining of the light of consciousness in conceptual terms. Those who cannot penetrate through this veil of conceptual representation and be conscious of the immediacy of things and themselves just as they are, that is, as clearly evident manifestations of the light of consciousness, are cut off both from the outer reality of the object and the inner reality of the subject. Thus removed from themselves and, by the same token, from the world around them, they are helplessly caught up in the trammels of conditioned existence. Thus Vāmanadatta pertinently quotes the dictum: "all thought is *saṁsāra*".[92]

Like all Hindu monists, Vāmanadatta preaches that liberation comes by identifying ourselves with the true Self (in this case identified with Viṣṇu), and by freeing ourselves of false identification with

[90] Ibid., 1/14. [91] Ibid., 1/70. [92] Ibid., 3/2.

the body and all else that is not Self (*anātman*). For while the Self is bliss itself, non-Self — its very opposite — is suffering.[93] But while the Self must be known, it cannot be known as an object. If the Self were to be an object, the subject who perceives it would be superior to it. Thus there would be something higher than the Self and another higher than that would be required in order to know it. Ultimate Being cannot be known like a sense object, for all sense objects are limited, conditioned entities.[94] This does not mean that the Self is never known objectively, rather that it is not known in itself as it is in this way. When consciousness is perceived as an object, it becomes the things of the world that are 'other' than the Self. As Vāmanadatta says:

"Just as one perceives the external form of that which is in the field of vision, just so consciousness, established in the act of perception, perceives its own nature as the object of knowledge."[95]

In order to know the Self, we must find another mode of knowledge:

"Transcending all things, how can anyone describe Your nature (O Lord)? Description applies only to that which is divided, while the Self of none is such and that (Self) is You, Who are the Self of all, and so for this reason also You cannot be described. The nature of the Supreme Self, free of alterations and divisions is the only means to know You: You can never be conceived."[96]

Words, the vehicle of thought, seemingly break up the unity of reality for the ignorant. We distinguish between one thing and another labeling one and then the other according to their functions. This division is a purely mental construct; although useful, indeed essential, for daily life, it is not real.[97] If some existing thing were to stand contradicted by another, this contradiction would necessarily extend to its essential nature. The being of entities cannot in itself oppose itself; difference, distinction and contradiction are all notions, they are not qualities inherent in the being of things.[98] Similarly, if Viṣṇu is everything and he is discernable in both subject and object, this distinction too is false — it is just a notion.[99] Viṣṇu must be known directly and not as the subject knows his object, and that is only possible if he is the Self:

[93] Ibid., 2/3.
[94] Ibid., 2/4-6.
[95] Ibid., 1/9.
[96] Ibid., 1/33-34.
[97] Ibid., 1/8.
[98] Ibid., 2/47.
[99] Ibid., 1/27-8.

"Everyone knows one's own nature (*svarūpa*), none can know that of another and one's own omnipresent nature is You (O Lord). Thus the universe is full of You." [100]

Vāmanadatta seeks to establish that this awareness of Self is the basis of all knowledge, even the most mundane. He builds up his epistemology on the basis of an idealism that accounts for the possibility of knowledge by positing it not as the product of cognitive activity but as its *a prior* ontological and epistemological ground which cognitive activity simply reveals. Veridical cognitive consciousness (*mānatā*)[101] is in every case one's own self-awareness alone (*svasaṁvedana*) which is understood to be the very Being (*sattā*) of consciousness free of thought constructs.[102] The three sources of right knowledge (*pramā*) are direct perception, inference and scripture.[103] All means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) are each individually associated with their specific object and so do not allow the subject to experience pure awareness directly [104] unless he makes a special effort to do so. Thus Vāmanadatta writes:

"You transcend all thought constructs and so, although directly apparent, are forgotten, as happens with something in front of a man whose mind is full of desire for something else." [105]

But, although Viṣṇu is worshipped as consciousness and this consciousness manifests as the objects of the world in and through each act of perception, Vāmanadatta does not go as far as his Kashmiri Śaiva counterparts who, perceiving reality in much the same way, conclude that the world-order and all that transcends it are encompassed in the self-reflective awareness of a universal 'I' consciousness. Thus, while Vāmanadatta's phenomenology coincides with that of Utpaladeva and of later Kashmiri Śaivites in general as far as the phenomenon of presentation is concerned, there is divergence in the characterization of the representational aspect, that is, the judgement of what is presented by the shining of the light of consciousness. A Kashmiri Śaivite would say that Vāmanadatta does not tackle this problem thoroughly. Implicit in his view is that not all representation is conceptual and that this non-conceptual representation is essentially an awareness of the Self as all things and as beyond them and

[100] Ibid., 1/5.
[101] Ibid., 2/39.
[102] Ibid., 2/48.
[103] Ibid., 2/35.
[104] Ibid., 2/34.
[105] Ibid., 1/35.

that it is the basis of all knowledge, but he doesn't take the next step and posit that this awareness is inherent in consciousness, in the sense that consciousness is self-awareness through which the world of conceptual representation is generated and hence the play of objectivity. I am not referring here to a mere absence of a technical term — such as '*vimarśa*' — more to the point is that Vāmanadatta categorically rejects any form of egoic projection onto absolute consciousness. All sense to self must be eradicated. As Vāmanadatta says:

"O Mādhava, only You remain when one free of ego (reflects that) You perform this action and (that it accords with) Your nature. Now if this separation (from You) which corresponds to this (false) presumption of egoic existence dissolves into the Self by devotion to You, separation is destroyed and oneness is established." [106]

The sense of oneness as 'I' is never an independent self-subsisting awareness; according to Vāmanadatta it is always the subject of predication as when one thinks: "this is different from me and I am different from that".[107] It is thus essentially a thought construct like all relativizing analytic notions. Instead of being a notion centred on the object, it is a notion concerning oneself (*asmadvikalpa*) and so, like its objective counterpart, it must be rejected as short of ultimacy. Vāmanadatta equates the ego with the notion of personal existence as individual, appropriating or acquisitive consciousness. It consists of an intent (*saṁkalpa*) to make the object one's own. Thus, rather than the sense of 'I' it is better described as the sense of 'mine'. This sense of 'mine' (*mamatā*) expresses itself each moment as an intention which leads to another, thus maintaining its existence. Vāmanadatta accordingly describes it as a transitory (*anitya*) product of the pulsing activity of consciousness (*spanda*). Just as death is the inevitable result of its persistence, so death ceases when it comes to an end.[108]

[106] Ibid., 1/100b-2a.

[107] Ibid., 2/29.

[108] Ibid., 4/42-3. Worth noting in passing is that while Vāmanadatta states expressly in this passage that the pulsation of consciousness — *Spanda* — is free of thought constructs he does not equate it with the dynamics of the absolute ego as most Kashmiri Śaivites do, but treates the ego as an epiphenomenon of its activity.

Here we notice a radical departure from the Śaiva phenomenology of Utpaladeva. This need not surprise us. The ego is understood in most schools of Indian thought as relative, a product of thought constructs which serves as a provisional subjective referent for a consciousness that wrongly identifies itself as the body and mind. At best, it is understood as part of the inner mental organ operating there as the factor which personalizes or appropriates the perceptions reflected and made known in the intellect.[109] It is Utpaladeva who formulates for the first time in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* a notion of the absolute as a pure ego consciousness and makes full use of it in a completely developed system, thus extending the universal Hindu doctrine of Self into a higher metaphysics of the Self as a Fichtian-like superego.[110] That Vāmanadatta's views are compatible with this ulterior development is exemplified by the extensive quotation of his work in the fourteenth chapter of the *Lakṣmītantra*. In this work Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu's spouse and power, is characterized as his 'I-ness' (*ahantā*), while he is eternal and perfect 'I' consciousness. Thus Lakṣmī proclaims in the *Lakṣmītantra*:

"He, Hari being 'I' (the Self) is regarded as the Self in all beings. I am the eternal I-hood of all living beings."[111] And: "Therefore Brahman, the eternal, is called Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa because the I-entity is always inherent in I-hood. The I-entity is always recognised as the source of I-hood; for one cannot exist without the other and each is invariably linked to the other."[112]

The *Lakṣmītantra*, which is certainly later than Utpaladeva, makes use here, as in much of the rest of its metaphysics, of notions

[109] For an excellent study of the concept of the ego in the major schools of Indian philosophy and Kashmiri Śaivism the reader is referred to Michel Hulin's book: *Le Principe de l'Égo dans la Pensée Indienne Classique. La Notion d'Ahaṁkāra*, publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, serie 8 fascicule 44, Paris, 1978.

[110] See chapter 1: *Self-awareness, Own Being and Egoity*, where I attempt to prove this assertion.

[111] LT, 2/13, translation by Sanyukta Gupta.

[112] Ibid., 2/16-17.

that are typically Kashmiri Śaiva.[113] If an original Pāñcarātra Saṁhitā is free to do this, there is no reason to be surprised if Vāmanadatta, who was a Kashmiri living in Kashmir during the period of Kashmiri Śaivism's most energetic period of growth, drew inspiration from the Śaiva monism current in his day. The close affinity between Vāmanadatta's views and monistic Śaivism is clearly evidenced by Abhinavagupta addressing him respectfully as 'teacher',[114] even though throughout his works he consistently relegates Vaiṣṇavism to a lower level than Śaivism as a whole and particularly that of his own Śaiva traditions.[115] In short, Vāmanadatta's work, despite its divergence in certain respects from Śaiva monism — particularly with regard to the ultimacy of the ego-sense — still remains, nonetheless, highly compatible with it. The extensive use Bhagavadutpala makes of the *Saṁvitprakāśa* as a source in his commentary on the *Spandakārikā* clearly exemplifies how Vāmanadatta's work can serve

[113] The *Lakṣmītantra* contains citations from the *Svacchandabhairavatantra* and the *Vijñānabhairava*, both Tantric texts being well-known and respected by Kashmiri Śaivites. It also cites Kṣemarāja, Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta in a number of places. According to Sanderson, the *Lakṣmītantra* and the *Ahirbudhnyasamhitā* quoted by Naṭatur Ammāḷ (= Vatsya Varadācārya) must have been composed between 1100 and 1200 in South India because the mantras of the Yajurveda quoted in them belong to the Taittirīya recension peculiar to the Southern tradition after the 10th century.

[114] TĀ, 5/155a, see p. 67, n. 5.

[115] Abhinavagupta devotes the 35th chapter of his *Tantrāloka* to the relationship he believes exists between the various scriptural traditions as taught him by Śambhunātha, his Trika teacher (TĀ, 35/44b). There he uncompromisingly declares that:

"In order to achieve the various fruits more or less perfect of duty (*dharma*), profit (*artha*), sexual pleasure (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*), there is only one means, namely, the Śaivāgama" (ibid., 35/24). Abhinava agrees that teachings are diverse but they also yield different fruits at differing levels so that those at a lower level cannot yield the fruits of a higher one: "The various forms such as Viṣṇu etc. which God assumes are due to his self-differentiation and, as such, that is, due to this differentiation, are on the plane of Māyā. The 'descents of power' (*śaktipāta*) which do undoubtably occur as associated with these limited forms therefore bestow only the fruits proper to them but not, ultimately, identification with Śiva." (Ibid., 13/2681-70a, cf. ibid., 35/29).

to bridge the gap between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism in the Kashmiri Śaiva context. Bhagavadutpala, as his ancestry and traditional appellation — Utpala Vaiṣṇava — suggest, had strong ties with the Vaiṣṇava community although he was undoubtedly a Śaivite when he wrote his commentary. Vāmanadatta's work served his purpose admirably, for here was a text that he could freely quote that would find approval by both groups, and so link together more closely the Pāñcarātra and Śaiva sources that he freely quotes without deference to one or the other, in an attempt to establish that the doctrine of the *Spandakārikā* is taught in both.

Apart from these general, pervasive Śaiva influences that can be discerned in Vāmanadatta's work, we find more specific references which show that Vāmanadatta accepted the more esoteric, strongly Śākta-oriented Śaiva traditions prevalent in Kashmir, namely, those of the Krama school. Thus, for example, we can discern clear traces of Krama notions in the following passage:

"O Lord, the abiding condition of all things is that of Your own immutable nature simultaneously (manifest everywhere). It can be known by means of its progressively mutating nature (*kramasvarūpa*) (that is such without thereby) running contrary to the simultaneity (of the immediacy of Being). Simultaneity is possible in the absence of progressive change (*krama*), which in its turn (is possible only) in the absence of the former. Thus, as they are mutually contradictory, they cannot arise from one another. So, in this way, those who have realized the ultimate truth know that You manifest Your self-luminous conscious nature as the state of mutual dependence (between these polarities and all things)." [116]

This way of understanding the fundamental polarities of existence as progression — *krama* — versus simultaneity — *yaugapādya* — is typical of Krama absolutism which views the absolute as dynamic consciousness that, forming itself into all things, is the entire process of creation, persistence, and destruction while standing beyond them in a fourth ineffable — *anākhya* — state in which consciousness is at once all of them simultaneously. From this point of view, the ineffability and absolute nature of consciousness, the one reality, lies in its being this progression despite remaining itself

[116] SP, 1/66-8.

changeless. This position is summed up by Abhinava when he says: "the pure principle of consciousness transcends all talk of succession (*krama*) or its absence (*akrama*)." [117]

There is one place in Vāmanadatta's work where his Krama leanings are made fully explicit. In the beginning of the fourth section he makes a plea for tolerance, insisting that, although Viṣṇu's energy assumes various names and forms according to different schools of thought, one cannot say that these differences correspond to separate principles or, for that matter, that they do not. This is, anyway, of no importance, that which one should abandon is not a view but karma which is binding, and that which is to be taken up is the pure consciousness of the subject. He concludes that this power is:

"One and abides in many states as both mobile and motionless. She rests on the foundation of time which is the twelve-petelled lotus and by her progressive differentiation (*kalanā*) She, Kālakarṣiṇī, makes her (eternal) Time manifest as having assumed the form of (temporal) time by means of the generation and destruction of (all) existing things." [118]

Kālakarṣiṇi, also called Kālasaṁkarṣinī, is well known as a form of Kālī venerated in the Krama school. Her association with the twelve-petelled lotus described as the foundation of time is possibly a reference to the cycle of twelve Kālīs that lies at the core of Krama mysticism.

Important also, as indicative of Vāmanadatta's non-Vaiṣṇava influences, is his representation of the arising and falling away of images within consciousness as a discontinuous process: there is a gap between the arising of one form and the falling away of another. The attentive soul who can catch this moment in the center between one perception and the next no longer feels the bondage of the illusory play of Māyā through the activity of thought, but experiences it all as the pure expansion of consciousness.[119] We can compare this view with that of Kṣemarāja who says:

"This supreme plane of awareness consists of all the powers (of consciousness) pulsing in unity. Although actually manifest to all constantly, on the plane of Māyā it does not sustain a firm realization

[117] TĀ, 4/180ab. [118] SP, 4/12-3. [119] Ibid., 1/4 and 1/41-44.

of consciousness within oneself. Even there, however, it is clearly manifest at every junction (between cognitions)." [120]

In the center between perceptions the attentive soul can experience the pure indeterminate awareness (*nirvikalpa*) that serves as the basis of determinate perception as its source, resting place, and end. In the center abides what Vāmanadatta calls 'pure experience' (*śuddhānubhava*);[121] that is, the fundamental self-awareness (*svasaṁvedana*) through which consciousness is perceived and is the basis of all knowledge which Kashmiri Śaivites identify, as we have already noted, with absolute 'I' consciousness.

Finally, it is important to stress that, despite the powerful influence Śaiva monism exerted on Vāmanadatta, he remains thoroughly Vaiṣṇava throughout his work. Viṣṇu is his sole object of devotion which he also worships as his incarnations that he understands as hypostheses or aspects of consciousness and its manifestations.[122] His Pāñcarātra associations are also clearly evident from his presentation of the four *vyūhas* — Vāsudeva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, to which he assigns mystic centers in the body as part of a developing praxis in which their association with their energies plays a prominent role.[123] Indeed, despite the space Vāmanadatta dedicates in his work to establishing, even as he praises Viṣṇu, that consciousness alone, free of all diversity and subject-object distinctions, is ultimately real, his primary concern is with practice. Thus not only does he dedicate space to a description of the yogic centers and channels in the body viewed from the perspective of his sophisticated idealism, he also devotes the entire fifth chapter to an analysis of the phonemes as vital components of mantra and vehicles of the sound (*nāda*) or word (*śabda*) energy of consciousness which he identifies with the syllable *Oṁ* and that make mantras powerful and cosmically significant as incorporating within themselves the energies of all manifestation and what lies in the transcendent beyond it. This concern fits naturally with Vāmanadatta's recurrent references to

[120] SpSam, p. 6, see PTv, p. 106 ff. where Abhinava deals with this practice extensively.

[121] SP, 1/41.

[122] Ibid., 1/25 ff.

[123] Ibid., 4/64ff.

Speech (*vāc*), its levels, forms and nature. Here he deals with a common concern of both Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavas discussed not only in their secondary *śāstric* traditions but also in the primary scriptures of both groups.

To conclude we can say that the discovery and edition of Vāmanadatta's work may well serve as a stimulus for further research into the interaction between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism in general and, more specifically, between their monistic forms. Thus a work like Bhāskara's *Kakṣyāstotra* evidences, in the passages quoted from it, signs of the author's attempts to integrate certain basic Pāñcarātra notions into his Śaiva monism.[124] Other works, like the *Cicchaktisaṁstuti* [125] that we know of only from quotations, exhibit a sort of intermediary character. This text, focusing on Śakti, draws from both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava ideas to support its Śākta monism. Again, although the *Paramārthasāra* draws its inspiration from other sources to develop its monism, its existence is a further indication that, although less extensive than their Śaiva equivalents, Vaiṣṇava monisms deserve to be carefully researched and not only in the works of known authors but, more especially, in the original Pāñcarātra scriptures amongst which some, particularly the *Ahirbudhnyasaṁhitā* and the *Lakṣmītantra*, exhibit marked Śaiva influences.

[124] I am thinking here particularly of the verses from the *Kakṣyāstotra* quoted in SpPra, p.103.

[125] Quoted ibid., p. 87 and p. 113.

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The Inner Pilgrimage of the Tantras

The Sacred Geography of the Kubjikā Tantras with reference to the Bhairava and Kaula Tantras

This paper focuses on the sacred geography of a few Śaiva schools of the Bhairava Tantras and their parallel Kaula schools,[1] in particular that of the little-known goddess Kubjikā and, to a lesser extent, the much better known goddess Tripurā. Apart from the Tantras

[1] One could term these Kaula schools 'Śākta', i.e centred on the worship of goddesses. However, although this term does indeed characterize the Kaula schools correctly, it is a misleading term in this context. This is because it would imply that the Bhairava Tantras were not Śākta. It is true that the milder, more Siddhānta-like Bhairava Tantras, such as the *Svacchanda-bhairavatantra*, are centred primarily on the worship of the male deity, as the generic term for this type of Tantra suggests. However, this is not the case with the more 'extreme' members of this class. These are generally replete with Yoginī cults and sharply focused on the feminine. The *Jayadrathayāmala*, for example, is an important Bhairava Tantra, but it is primarily concerned with the worship of numerous forms of Kālī, especially Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī. The chapters or sections in the JY concerned with the worship of Kālī are commonly (but not invariably) labelled there as parts of the *Kālīkrama* (i.e Kālī 'liturgy', 'tradition' or 'transmission') which is also sometimes called the *Kālīkula*. So, for example, in one place in the JY we read: "This secret is the *Kālīkula*, that has come through the oral transmission." *kālīkulam idaṁ guhyaṁ mukhapāramparāgatam* | JY 4/21/26ab. The distinction between the two types of Tantras — the Bhairava and Kaula — is thus not coterminous with that between Śaiva and Śākta. Kula is a modality (*prakriyā*) or form of practice (*ācāra*) which the texts distinguish from the Tantric one. In this perspective, the Bhairava Tantras are primarily concerned with Tantric practice (*tantrācāra*) but allow for the Kaula mode. Kaula Tantras, on the other hand, pride themselves in being free of the Tantric mode (*tantrācāravivarjita*). But note that the 'Tantric mode' may also be Śākta.

themselves, a major source for this paper is the work of the great 11th-century Kashmiri, Abhinavagupta, especially his *Tantrāloka*. All the sources belong to the culmination of the formative period of Tantrism,[2] that is, between the 9th and 12th century. A major feature of these geographies, which this paper will briefly explore, is the manner in which they have been interiorized.

In 1950 D.C. Sircar published the *Śākta Pīṭhas*. In this work he presents an edition of the *Pīṭhanirṇaya* that lists 51 goddess sites (*pīṭha*). In his lengthy introduction, Sircar reproduces a number of such lists from other sources, mostly Purāṇas and some Tantras. Apart from this well-known work, very little research has been done on the sacred geographies of the Tantras in comparison to the relatively large amount of research that has been done on the geographies of the Purāṇas and the Epics. One obvious reason for this is that many of the sacred sites of the Purāṇas and Epics are still functional. Hence they can be accurately located and much can be learnt about them from work in

The *Tantrasadbhāva*, for example, is a major Bhairava Tantra of the Trika school. Although it teaches, amongst other things, the worship of a triad of goddesses — Parā, Parāparā and Aparā — it professes the excellence of the Tantric mode. Thus there we read: "He who observes the secret Tantric mode which is hard to attain is successful without a doubt, as Bhairava has declared."

> *yas tu pālayate guptaṁ tantrācāraṁ sudurlabham |*
> *sa siddhyati na sandeho yathā bhairava abravīt ||* TS 5/51

It is best therefore to leave the traditional distinction between 'Bhairava' and 'Kaula' as it is. Even so, the term Śākta, in a generic, adjectival sense, is both meaningful and convenient and is used accordingly in this paper.

[2] Padoux (2000: 12) rightly admonishes that: "the term *tāntrika* — that is to say, tantric, but not in the modern sense of the word — is of ancient usage in India; but the term 'Tantrism' is a relatively recent western creation. It is better not to use a term that leads one to suppose there exists in the vast socio-religious complex of Hinduism a current, sect or entity called tantrism." I use this term in this paper, as I use the term Śākta, in a broad generic sense with reference to disparate tantric (*tāntrika*) traditions simply as a matter of convenience. I do not imply thereby that Tantrism is a sect or religion in its own right. So when I refer to the development of Tantrism, for example, I intend the development of the many Tantric sects and cults as a whole, although, of course, they may not all be literally growing together at any one time in the same way or rate.

the field. Although a number of the sites found in the early Tantras have been absorbed into the sacred geography of the Purāṇas and Epics or may have been common to both from an early period, their connection with the Tantric tradition has mostly been lost. It follows, therefore, that the Sanskritic tradition associated with most of these sites does not generally refer to the Tantras as its authority. And even where such references exist, they are to Tantras of a later period.

Another reason why the sacred geography of the Tantras has not received much attention is that the roots of Tantrism belong to a culture originally developed by peripatetic ascetics. In the transition to the idiom of the Sanskrit normative texts (*śāstra*) — in this case the Tantras — the forms of the earlier proto-Tantric cults [3] were necessarily domesticated to varying degrees and systematized by those who knew this idiom best, namely, Brahmins and those ascetics who were well versed in Brahminical culture.[4] This was not at all a unique phenomenon in the history of Hinduism; Dumont, amongst others, has drawn attention to the fact that:

[3] I deliberately refer to these seminal cults as 'proto-Tantric' to reserve the adjective 'Tantric' for those cults and their elemental contents found in the texts denoted as Tantras or by some equivalent term. One of these terms is 'Āgama' which literally means '(a tradition) coming from the past'. This 'coming' (*āgama*) is often presented in the texts as being originally, and most fundamentally, an oral transmission. Many of the numerous rituals described in the early Tantras, especially the Śaiva and their offshoot, the goddess-centred Kaula Tantras, are best suited for the solitary peripatetic ascetic. The great Tantric systems that developed in the early period, that is, prior to the 12th century, are highly elaborate. Those who built these systems must have been erudite practitioners who approached their task from the perspective of the prior and contemporary literary traditions. These traditions furnished ready-made forms and norms that served as a filter through which what remained of the 'external', 'oral' elements was transformed and absorbed. This took place so thoroughly and the additional, purely literary input was so massive that contact with these sources became highly tenuous, a correct assessment of their nature being now problematic.

[4] The Buddhist Tantras, especially those of the Yoga and Anuttarayoga classes, which were, in some respects, strongly influenced by their Śaivite equivalents, probably developed in an analogous manner. In this case wandering Buddhist ascetics contributed substantially, although not exclusively, to laying the foundations of the Tantric systems, which were mostly developed

"The secret of Hinduism may be found in the dialogue between the renouncer and the man-in-the-world. ...In fact the man-in-the-world, and particularly the Brahmin, is given the credit for the ideas which he may have adopted but not invented. Such ideas are much more relevant and they clearly belong to the thought of the renouncer." [5]

This is particularly true of the early Śākta [6] and Śaiva Tantric ascetics. Behaving in accord with a different code of conduct which, although ethically very stringent, differs from the commonly accepted one of *smārta* Dharma, these antinomian ascetics lived in a separate reality. Enjoined in their rituals (*pūjā*), religious conduct (*caryā*), and itinerant life, to make no distinction between pure and impure, in terms of the conventional moral code of the householder they were little different from the outcastes with whom they freely associated. And yet these ascetics were the workers of wonders and, above all, accomplished adepts who founded many, if not all of the numerous Tantric traditions.[7]

systematically by erudite monks in their monasteries. In this case the input of the system builders was supplemented not only by the Buddhist literary traditions (*śāstra*) but also by the Śaiva. The Buddhists conceived this process to be one of interiorization of the Śaiva elements. These elements were 'external' both because they were outside Buddhism and, above all, because they were literally done. 'Internalized', they could be inserted into the monumental structures of the great Buddhist Tantric systems.

[5] Dumont 1980: 270, 275 quoted by Quigley 1993: 56.

[6] See footnote 1 above.

[7] The examples that could be quoted are innumerable. A Kubjikā Tantra tells us about a Vidyānanda who received initiation from Niṣkriyānanda. The text tells us:

"Here was a sage (*muni*) called Śīlāciti. His (spiritual) son was an accomplished adept — Siddha — whose appearance was like that of a (tribal) Śābara. He was called Vidyānanda. He lived in cremation grounds and devoutly practised nightly vigils (*niśāṭana*). He was a Tantric adept (*vīra*, lit. 'hero') intent on the practice of Kuṇḍalinī Yoga (*cakracāra*, lit. 'practice of the wheels' or 'devoutly attended Tantric rites'). Śrīśaila is a Śivapīṭha. To the north of it, on a mountain with many peaks, is a divine cave made of gold that is venerated by Siddhas and gods. He, the Vidyāśābara, worshipped there. He practised desirous of the Knowledge Free of Action (*niṣkriyājñāna*). He practised the most intense form of divine devotion. Thus Niṣkriyānanda was pleased with him and transmitted Kālikā's tradition (*krama*) to him." (CMSS 7/188ff).

Some Tantric cults, particularly those of the Śaiva Siddhānta and the Vaiṣṇava Pañcarātra, took to temple-building and hence managed to establish extensive public cults. But other forms of Tantrism, particularly the Śākta cults, stayed closer to their roots and so maintained their original, strongly closed, esoteric character, despite the inevitable process of domestication. The householder in such cases did not need to go to a temple or sacred site. He simply reproduced the temple and the original wayfaring life in his imagination by means of symbolic representations. These, and the sacred space he created to perform the prescribed rituals and Yoga, he projected into himself. Accordingly, the sacred geographies of such cults lay close to the edge of redundancy and were subject to considerable transformation and assimilation into the greater encompassing *smārta* sacred geographies of the Purāṇas.

Nowadays, the literate (as opposed to the folk) religions of the populations of large areas of South Asia are still based to a large degree on the Tantras. The Śaiva rituals performed in the temples of South India are adapted from the Śaivasiddhānta Āgamas just as the Vaiṣṇava rituals are based on those prescribed in the Pañcarātra and Vaikhānasa Saṁhitās.[8] The Liṅgāyat Śaivism of Andhra and Karṇā-ṭaka is based on a corpus of Śaiva Āgamas developed independently of the Siddhānta, although similar to it in many respects and clearly influenced by it. In Bengal, Maithila and Assam the Śāktism of the late (post-12th century) Śākta Tantras is still practised. Especially relevant from the point of view of this paper is the esoteric literate religion of the inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, which is thoroughly rooted in the Tantric traditions of the texts I have chosen to examine here.

There are good reasons to believe that the role of Tantrism[9] in the religions of South Asia was much greater in the past than it is at

[8] The term *saṁhitā* literally means '(a thing that has been) assembled', i.e. a 'compilation'. In this case, the term is a synonym of the term Tantra. These texts also refer to themselves as 'Tantras' and 'Āgamas', just as some of their Śaiva equivalents, aware of their own composite, compiled nature, refer to themselves as *saṁhitās*.

[9] See footnote 2 above.

present, although its esoteric nature clearly indicates the presence of a larger, encompassing exoteric milieu. Its expansion in the past (especially between the 6th and 12th centuries) and survival up to the present was possible to the degree in which Tantrism managed to adapt to the requirements and conditions of the householder. The strategies adopted to make these adaptations possible are no less extensive and diverse than the extent of the cultural forms, philosophical thought, ritual and lifestyles to which they have given rise.

This paper is an attempt to analyze a few examples, drawn from selected Tantric sources (especially the Kubjikā Tantras), of one of these strategies, namely, the interiorization of their own sacred geography. These texts perceive how the external sacred geography draws its power from its internal counterpart, while the inner geography derives its form from the outer. Thus the two give life to one another, even when their relationship has been interiorized and become purely ideal. The dialectical interplay between the inner and outer yields more than just the accumulation of the energy of an interiorized sacred place. It sucks into itself the outer form to place it at the very centre of reality. The Nameless and Formless thus assumes name and form — as the geography of the innermost creative core of reality.

Thus, an essential feature of the sacred geography of these texts is that it is always understood to have an internal equivalent. As one would expect, the ideal, interior pole progressively assumes increasingly greater prominence over the exterior one until the latter dwindles away into a virtual cipher. Even so, we should not forget that for this dialectic to function properly, this sacred geography must, at its origins at least, be external, that is, empirically real. This is true not in spite of, but because of the ideal reality of the inner, even though the inner is the product of the power of the creative imagination applied to the creation of a sacred universe for the purpose of ritual, contemplation (i.e. Yoga), and the development of insight (*jñāna*). We shall therefore need to examine both, that is, the concrete outer geography and its ideal inner equivalent, in order to understand the manner of their interaction and with it the sacred geography of these Tantras.

In order to do this I will present a few exemplary geographies, both to determine their content and to see how these principles operate in the doctrines of the Tantras chosen for study. I will focus especially on the Tantras of the goddess Kubjikā.

An important feature of this geography is that it can be interiorized to varying degrees depending on the interiority of the locus of projection. This can be:

1) The Body: The corporeal surface of inscription [10] may be on or around the body as well as in the centres and channels within it. Examples we will examine include the projection of the sacred places founded by the goddess Kubjikā in her tour of India onto the face, as described in the Kubjikā Tantras, and the imaginary lotus of sacred sites projected into the body according to the *Niśisaṁcāra*, a Bhairava Tantra quoted by Abhinavagupta in his *Tantrāloka*.

2) The Breath: This is variously represented. In some of the following examples, the twofold character of the breath, dynamic and at rest, characterized as Sound (*nāda*) and the Point (*bindu*), respectively, are the loci of projection.

3) Core reality: At this, the innermost level, the ground of existence itself is the surface of inscription. In this case, sacred place is the Divine Core. This is not a projection but the radiating source of all projections that together constitute the manifest world with its sacred geography. According to the Tantras of the Kālī cult (the Kālīkrama), for example, the supreme power of the deity's divine consciousness is simultaneously both the source and the sacred seat — *pīṭha* — of its energies:

"O mother! This, the great sacred seat (*pīṭha*) born from You, is the energized vitality (of consciousness) which pours forth when Śiva becomes one with You by virtue of Your perpetually expanding body of energy.

And this, the (divine) intellect, the supreme vitality (of consciousness) is You, O (goddess) Śivā, whose body of light abides within the five elements beginning with Earth and who generates the Wheel of the Sacred Seats (*pīṭhacakra* — corresponding to them). You, who alone possess all the powers of the Wheel of the Sacred Seats, abide

[10] I am indebted to Professor Sanderson of Oxford for this expression.

always and everywhere. Perceived, O Mother, by the wise who are at one with the force (of pure consciousness — *udyama*), You are the unobscured dawning (of enlightenment)." [11]

In the Kubjikā cult, in a manner typical of the symbolism of Śākta cults in general, the Divine Core is primarily characterized as the triangular geometric icon that represents the goddess as the Source — Yoni — of manifestation. Let us begin from this inner core first, as the teaching that concerns it is central to the doctrine of the Kubjikā Tantras that I have chosen for detailed study.

As emanation itself, Kubjikā is the Maṇḍala that is both the source of the universe and its ideal geometry. In this case the Maṇḍala is primarily the Triangle of the *Yoni* (lit. '*vulva*') which is the goddess herself. This is why she is called Vakrā (Crooked) and Kubjikā (Hunchbacked). This basic triangular form has four components located at the three corners and the centre. These are the four primary seats (*pīṭha*) of the goddess. The goddess is the entire economy of all the energies both in the universe and in their microcosmic and transcendent parallels in consciousness. But she is not just the sum of all energies; she is also every one of them individually. They are deployed in sacred space that the Tantras in general characterize as an Emptiness (*śūnya*) called the Sky (*kha, vyoman*) or the ethereal space of consciousness (*cidākāśa*). The pervasive condition of these energies precedes and, in one aspect, perpetually transcends manifestation, which is understood to take place on the analogy of speech and its attendant vehicle, breathing. Every cosmogonic manifestation of deity (theophany) and power (kratophany) occurs in a specific place, the Sacred Place (*sthāna*) that is the locus of immanence. Presenting itself to itself, the transcendent becomes immanent through a process of localization analogous to that of the articulation of speech.

[11] *amba śaktivapuṣā tvayonmeṣadrūpayā samarasaḥ śivo yadā |*
yat tadollasati vīryam ūrjitaṁ pīṭha eṣa hi mahāṁs tvadutthitaḥ ||
yā śive sphuraṇaśaktir akṣayā kṣmādipañcakaniviṣṭabhātanuḥ |
sā mahad bhavati vīryam agrimaṁ yanmayī tvam asi pīṭhacakrasūḥ ||
pīṭhacakranikaraikadharmiṇī tvaṁ sthitā ca satataṁ samantataḥ |
sadbhir udyamanirantarātmabhir lakṣyase 'mba niravagrahodayā ||

CGC 76-8

Powerful cosmogonic sounds emanate from powerful places; indeed powerful sounds are powerful places and as such the phonemic components of these sounds are the mantric energies of sacred places. Thus the identity of these energies as sacred objects of worship is determined by their vital mantric character and locations (*sthāna*), of which four are the most important. Accordingly, we read in a Kubjikā Tantra:

"The energy called the *Yoni* is endowed with the movement of the three paths (i.e. the three major channels of the vital breath), consists of the three syllables (of creation, persistence and destruction, i.e. AIṂ, HRĪṂ, ŚRĪṂ) and three aspects (the powers of will, knowledge and action). (It contains) the venerable Uḍḍiyāṇa which, endowed with the supreme energy and well energized, is located in the middle. The venerable (sacred seat) called Jālandhara is located within the abode manifested in the right corner. The venerable sacred seat Pūrṇa is in the left (corner), being formed through the fear of the fettered, while Kāmarūpa is in the front (lower corner of this downward pointing triangle)." [12]

[12] *yā sā śaktir bhagākhyā tripathagatiyutā tryakṣarā triprakārā*
tasyāḥ śrī-uḍḍiyāṇaṁ parakalasahitaṁ madhyasaṁsthaṁ sudīptam |
tac chrījālandharākhyaṁ prakaṭitanilaye dakṣiṇe caiva koṇe
vāme śrīpūrṇapīṭhaṁ paśujanabhayakṛt kāmarūpaṁ tadagre || CMSS 1/4

The above verse is in *sragdharā* metre. Apart from the standard *śloka*, the metre in which most of the Tantras are written, this complex metre appears to have been especially favoured by Tantric authors prior to the 11th century. The Buddhist *Kālacakra Tantra* is almost entirely written in this metre. The above passage is of special interest because it is quoted in the *Vimalaprabhā*, a commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra* by Śrīpuṇḍarīka, who lived in the middle of the 11th century. In the usual derisive manner of Buddhist commentators towards others who are not Buddhists, Puṇḍarīka refers to those who accept the authority of this text as demons to be devoured (*bhakṣyadaitya*). They have not known the supreme secret and their body is like that of the demon Māra who tormented the Buddha (*Vimalaprabhā*, vol. 3, 146-8). This body is the triangular Yoni (*bhaga*) of the goddess that this verse describes and the Kubjikā Tantras teach the adept should project into his own body. Here is yet another testimony to the existence of the Kubjikā Tantras in the 11th century outside Nepal, possibly in Bengal, if this is the place where Śrīpuṇḍarīka wrote his commentary as some scholars believe.

The earliest manuscripts of the Kubjikā Tantras (all of which discovered so far are Nepalese) belong to the first half of the 11th century. Thus by the 11th century, at the latest, this scheme of four primary sacred sites (*pīṭha*), which became largely standard for the whole of subsequent Tantric Śāktism, was already well established and thoroughly interiorized in the Kubjikā Tantras. The primary importance of these places for such forms of Tantrism, both Śaiva and Śākta, cannot be overstated. An important example on the Hindu side is the incorporation of this triangle, wholesale with its sacred seats, into the centre of Śrīcakra by the Tantras of the goddess Tripurā. The same grouping of sacred seats is also given pride of place in the Buddhist *Hevajra Tantra* and some of the other major Buddhist Tantras of the Anuttarayoga and Yoga groups.[13] They interiorized these places so thoroughly in fact that the Four Sacred Seats (*catuṣpīṭha*) came to represent metaphysical principles.[14] As Map 9, plotted on the basis of a selection of such texts indicates, the sacred geography of these Tantras has much in common with those of their Hindu equivalents of the time, including the Kubjikā Tantras.

The process of interiorization of these places is so ancient and thorough that the exact location of these places is an object of much scholarly dispute. An additional process which, in the case of the Tantras at least, accompanies, as well shall see, that of interiorization, renders the exact identification of these places even more difficult. I am referring to the phenomenon of replication, whereby sacred places of pan-Indian importance are projected into local geographies.

Although I cannot hope to resolve these disputes, I shall venture to present hitherto unanalyzed material pertinent to this problem with a few modest observations and a very tentative hypothesis. Firstly, I assume that the commonly held view that the locations of Kāmarūpa and Jālandhara are in Assam and the Jammu region, respectively, is correct. This is a reasonable assumption, inasmuch as both these

[13] The *Hevajra Tantra* declares that:

pīṭhaṁ jālandharaṁ khyātam uḍḍiyānaṁ tathaiva ca |
pīṭhaṁ paurṇagiriś caiva kāmarūpaṁ tathaiva ca ||

"Jālandhara is said to be a sacred seat (*pīṭha*), as is Uḍḍiyāna. Paurṇagiri is a sacred seat and so is Kāmarūpa." HT 1/7/12.

[14] Sircar 1973: 11.

places, unlike the other two, Uḍḍiyāna and Pūrṇagiri, are important centres of Śāktism to this day. Moreover, the character of at least one of these places and its characterization in the Tantras appear to correspond. I am referring to Jālandhara. Tantric etymology derives the first part of this name from the word *jvāla* meaning 'flame' or *jāla* meaning 'net'. These two derivations are combined to furnish a description of Jālandhara as the place that "bears (*-dhara*) the net or series of the goddess's flaming energies".[15] Most Hindus know that in the Kangra Valley, close to the modern town of Jālandhara in the Jammu region, there is a cave where natural gas leaks from cracks in the rock. The small flames that this produces are worshipped to this day as the manifest form of the goddess Jvālamukhī whose name literally means '(the goddess) whose mouth is made of flames'.[16]

Kāmarūpa is harder to identify. The original name of this place, known to both early Hindu and Buddhist sources, is Kāmaru. The Sanskritized form 'Kāmarūpa' is easily derivable from it. This place

[15] *mahājvālālisandīptaṁ dīptatejānalaprabham |*
mahājvālāvalīṭopaṁ devyās tejo mahādbhutam |
dhṛtaṁ yena pratāpo 'syās tena tajjālasaṁjñakam || KMT 2/50cd-51

"Powerful with its series of great flames, the radiant energy (*tejas*) of the goddess is very astonishing. Intensified with rows of great flames, it has the light of intensely burning fire. (This sacred seat) which bears her great heat is (therefore) called Jāla."

[16] Bakker examines the sources concerning Jālandhara. These range from the accounts of the 6th-century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan tsang, Muslim accounts from the 16th century onwards and 19th-century British archeologists and travellers, as well as Sanskrit sources. Bakker (1983: 60f.) reports that the country of Jālandhara is said to have received its name from a Daitya king called Jālandhara. According to the *Padmapurāṇa*, Jālandhara, the son of the Ocean and the Ganges, was given a part of India (*jambudvīpa*) for his residence. This country came to be known as Jālandhara. (*Padmapurāṇa,* Uttarakhanda, 4/3 ff.). Mythology identifies this area with the vast body of the demon Jālandhara who was slain by Śiva in battle. The local tradition of the Kangra Valley, which is a part of this area, identifies Jālandhara's mouth with the goddess Jvālamukhī, whose shrine is located in the Valley. Examining the sources at his disposal, Bakker perceives a connection between the location of this goddess and Jālandhara even without referring to the Tantras where this connection is explicit.

is of great importance for the early Śākta — technically called Kaula — Tantras and the strongly Śākta-orientated Bhairava Tantras. This is largely because of its association with Matsyendranātha, the reputed originator of the Kaula teachings and therefore, by extension, all the Kaula Tantric traditions, including those of Kubjikā, Tripurā and Kālī.[17] Abhinavagupta praises him first, before all the other teachers he venerates at the beginning of his monumental exegesis of the Tantric schools known to him, the *Tantrāloka*. Jayaratha, in his commentary on the *Tantrāloka*, tells us that this is because Matsyendranātha is "famous as the one who revealed all the Kula scriptures".[18] He was especially important for Abhinavagupta because the latter, like many Tantrics of the 11th-century Kashmir in which he lived, considered Śākta Kaula ritual and doctrine (*kulaprakriyā*) superior to its Śaiva-cum-Bhairava equivalent (*tantraprakriyā*), with which it is blended both in the Tantras and Abhinava's *Tantrāloka*.[19] The many Kaula traditions that link this site with such an important figure and its persistent identification with Kāmākhya (modern Gauhati) in Assam lend credibility to the correctness of this identification.

[17] For the sake of precision, it is important to specify that the Tantric (rather than 'folk' or Purāṇic) worship of Kālī makes its first substantial appearance in the Bhairava Tantras. Although the Tantras of this group are centred on the worship of Bhairava, a fierce and erotic form of Śiva, Kaula (i.e. early Śākta) Tantrism developed out of them. The adept (variously called *sādhaka* or, in the *Brahmayāmala*, *avadhūta*) is identified in the rituals of many of these Tantras with Bhairava in order to satisfy the hordes of Yoginīs who are his encompassing and otherwise dangerous followers. Kālī and her numerous ectypes came to prominence in this context in the Bhairava Tantras. The unedited *Jayadrathayāmala*, which is said to consist of 24,000 verses, is an important Bhairava Tantra. Dedicated virtually exclusively to the worship of this goddess in numerous forms, it is one of our oldest and most substantial sources of her worship.

[18] *sakalakulaśāstrāvatārakatayā prasiddhaḥ* | TĀ vol. 1, p. 25.

[19] Jayaratha in his commentary on the *Tantrāloka* writes:

"... it is said that: 'just as the stars, although they remain in the sky, do not shine when the sun is present, in the same way the (Śaiva) Siddhāntatantras do not shine in the presence of the Kulāgama. Therefore, nothing apart from the Kula (teachings) can liberate from transmigratory existence'. Thus, even though the work about to be expounded (namely, the *Tantrāloka*) has two aspects because it consists of (an exposition of both the) Kula and the Tantric

Of the four places discussed here, the location of Pūrṇagīri has been the least investigated. The inhabitants of the Nainital district of the Himalayas identify a sacred mountain in that region as Pūrṇagiri. This name, however, is relatively recent. The older form, reported in the *Almora Gazetteer* of 1911, is Puniagiri, which is derivable from the Sanskrit Puṇyagiri ('Mountain of Merit'), rather than Pūrṇagiri. Another candidate is found in Orissa. There, learned Oḍīyas, on the basis of their local traditions, identify it with the town of Puṣpagiri.[20] Another possibility is a mountain by this name in central India that to my mind appears to be the most likely identification. In order to understand why I believe this, let us return to our triangle. Most accounts locate Pūrṇagiri in the left corner of the triangle and Jālandhara in the right. At first sight, it would appear that the texts are telling us that Jālandhara is to the south of Pūrṇagiri. But this is not the case. The directions are with respect to Kāmarūpa, which is located in the "front corner" (*agrakoṇa*). We see the same layout in Figure 1, which we shall discuss in some detail below. If Pūrṇagiri is identified with the mountain by that name in central India, then the points plotted for these three sites would in fact be located in the corners of an almost perfectly equilateral triangle (traced in red on Map 1).[21]

methods (*prakriyā*), and because, as the aforementioned reference declares, the Kula method is more fundamental (*prādhānya*) than other methods, he who has revealed it, the fourth teacher (belonging to this the fourth era, i.e. Matsyendranātha), is praised first in accord with the view (expressed in the following reference):

"Beloved, Bhairavī first obtained (the teachings concerning the practice of) Yoga from Bhairava and so pervaded (the entire universe). Then, fair-faced one, it was obtained from their presence by the Siddha called Mīna, that is, by the great soul, Macchanda (i.e. Matsyendra), in the great seat (*mahāpīṭha*) of Kāmarūpa." TĀ vol. 1, 24.

[20] This site greatly impressed the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan tsang, who visited Orissa in the 7th century. From his description it appears that Puṣpagiri was an important Buddhist centre at that time. Unfortunately, the exact location of Puṣpagiri remains uncertain. See Dehejia 1979: 14.

[21] I am grateful to Rana P.B. Singh for pointing this out to me. I should take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge Rana P.B. Singh's assistance. His help in making the maps for this paper has been invaluable, as has been his encouragement and scholarly advice on many matters related to pilgrimage studies and the sacred geography of India.

If we accept this view to be the correct one, the only major inconsistency with the texts is the location of Uḍḍiyāna. If this place was, as most scholars believe, located in the Swat Valley of northern Pakistan, it is far from the centre of this triangle, where most texts position Uḍḍiyāna. This anomaly is more striking if we compare this standard layout with the one found in the *Niśisaṁcāratantra*. Although this Tantra may have been lost,[22] the reference we have is particularly important because it was chosen by Abhinavagupta who lived in 11th-century Kashmir which, more extensive than today, included Uḍḍiyāna in its outlying north-western provinces. Uḍḍiyāna, also called Oḍḍiyāna,[23] was an extremely important Tantric site. It is still famous in Vajrayāna circles as the land of Padmasambhava, the great exponent of Vajrayāna in Tibet, which Tibetan historians refer to as a Kashmiri.[24] The site must have been well known to Abhinava

[22] A manuscript of a *Niśisaṁcāratantra* is preserved in the National Archives at Kathmandu. It is MS No. 1/1606; NGMPP Reel No. B 26/25. 48 folios long, it is written in old Newari script on palm-leaf. The folios are in disorder and the end is missing. Judging by the script, this manuscript is certainly prior to the 14th century and may well belong to the 13th or even 12th century. But despite the name and its undoubtedly early age, no *testimonia* have been traced in this manucript to allow us to be able to certify that this is the same text as the one to which Abhinavagupta refers. However, this may simply be because the manuscript is incomplete.

[23] Oḍḍiyāna is the spelling most commonly found in the primary sources to which I refer. However, the spelling Uḍḍiyāna is the one most popular in the secondary sources referred to here and in general. This is probably because this place, which is particularly important for Tantric Buddhism, is most commonly spelt this way in the Buddhist Tantras and related literature, which has been studied more extensively than the Śaiva equivalent. In order to be consistent with the secondary sources to which I refer here, I have retained the spelling Uḍḍiyāna in the body of this paper.

[24] See Dyczkowski 1987: 3 with reference to Nadou 1968: 38. Bakker notes that several locations for Uḍḍiyāna have been suggested. The best known are the Swat Valley in northern Pakistan, Orissa, and a region in Bengal. After briefly examining various views, Bakker opines that "the arguments for the location of Uḍḍiyāna in the Swat Valley seem to be stronger. Actual proof that the Swat Valley was known as Uḍḍiyāna is obtained from Tibetan travellers in the area. The Tibetan name for the Swat Valley was O rgyan or U rgyan, but a Buddhist pilgrim from Tibet, named Buddhagupta, tells us that Tibetan U rgyan is derived from Uḍḍiyāna, on account of the similarity of sound." (Bakker 1983: 54)

as the place where Jñānanetra, the founder of the branch of the Kālī tradition (*kālīkrama*) that was most important for Kashmir Śaivites, was said to have received his revelations.

The layout presented by the *Niśisaṁcāra*, a Bhairava Tantra (see Map 5), gives pride of place to Kāmarūpa as the main sacred seat. Its pre-eminent status is vividly symbolized by deriving it directly from the core of reality as the cosmogonic will (*icchā*), an identification suggested by the first member of its name Kāmarūpa which literally means 'sexual desire'. This assumes the form of the foundation (*ādhāra*) wherein all creation resides and finds its support. This desire emanates the Point (*bindu*) and Sound (*nāda*), which are the breath of the core as its pervasive vitality at rest within itself and in an active state, respectively. Uḍḍiyāna, to the right, is the Point and Pūrṇagiri, to the left, is the Sound. Abhinava rejects the possibility of a fourth seat in the centre, even one that some refer to as a "half (i.e. not fully formed) sacred seat" (*ardhapīṭha*).[25] This layout also produces a reasonably well-shaped triangle, although it is not equilateral, unlike the one of the first scheme (see Map 1: triangle traced in black). The *Niśisaṁcāra* knows of the existence of Jālandhara but relegates it to the status of a secondary site (*upasaṁdoha*), along with the borderlands of India, Nepal, Kashmir and "the direction in which foreigners (live) (*mlecchadik*)". Perhaps, when the *Niśisaṁcāra* was redacted, Jālandhara, along with these other places, had not yet gained the importance it was to have later.[26]

[25] A 'half-sacred seat' (*ardhapīṭha*) added on to the three main ones appears also in the *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* (Bagchi: 24). There it is called Arbuda which is the Sanskrit name of what is now a sacred site especially for the Jains, namely, Mount Abu in Rajasthan.

[26] Largely on the basis of these references, Dviveda states in his introduction to the *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava* (p. 81) that there were originally three primary seats, not four. This view is examined and rejected by Bakker (1993: 50-2). In support of Dviveda's thesis we may note that the Kubjikā Tantras vacillate between a scheme of three seats and one of four. The transmission of the Kubjikā teachings takes place through three lineages (*oli*) namely that of the Eldest (*jyeṣṭha*), Middle One (*madhyama*) and Child (*bāla*). They were propagated by three Siddhas from three sacred seats, in successive ages. The eldest Siddha was Oḍḍīśanātha who taught in Oḍḍiyāna (also spelt Uḍḍiyāna). He was followed by Ṣaṣṭhanātha, who taught in Pūrṇagiri. The third Siddha

Thus, I would tentatively suggest that there are two triangles: an earlier one which did not include Jālandhara and a later one that did. The importance of Uḍḍiyāna would not allow its omission in the later scheme and so it was conveniently placed in the centre to symbolize not its location, but excellence. A more realistic variant found in the Kubjikā Tantras, which lends further credence to the realism of the triangular model, locates Oṁkārapīṭha, that is, possibly, the town of Oṁkāreśvara in Madhya Pradesh, in the centre. Although this site is not in the literal geographical centre, it does, at least, lie within the triangle.[27]

Let us return to the Kubjikā Tantras to examine in greater detail their symbolic geography of the core reality — the goddess's triangular Yoni. As is the case with Tantric deities in general, one of the fundamental aspects of the goddess Kubjikā is her aniconic form as mantric sound. This is portrayed as the pure dynamic energy from which the universe is generated, of which the universe consists and into which it ultimately is resolved. In this perspective, the Triangle, representing the unified field of universal energy, through which the cycles of existence are perpetuated, consists of the primary energy of the fifty phonemes of the Sanskrit alphabet that together constitute the womb of mantras. Laid out in a triangular diagram (*prastāra*),[28]

was Mitranātha who taught in Kāmarūpa. Although this setup concurs with the strong triadic tendency apparent in the symbolism of the Kubjikā Tantras, it lacks the symmetry and completeness of a quaternity. There are four Ages (*yuga*), not three. Moreover, as Uḍḍiyāna is the first seat, and hence the original source of the teachings, it should be in the centre and not in a corner of the triangle. So we find that practically from the earliest Kubjikā Tantras an extra, fourth Siddha is added. He is Caryānātha. His name, as the texts themselves say is more an epithet than a proper name, derived from his assiduous Tantric practice (*caryā*). The other three Siddhas could also be called Caryānātha. Thus he appears to be less substantial than the others and his seat — Jālandhara — was originally a convenient addition.

[27] See *Ambāmatasaṁhitā*, fols. 10b-11a, where Oṁkāra replaces Uḍḍiyāṇa. Cf. also KMT 24/83.

[28] The word *prastāra* simply means 'grid' or 'diagram'. This term is used in this sense in other types of Sanskrit texts as well. Thus, for example, Sanskrit musicological texts use this term to denote a diagram or 'graph' (as Lath calls it) on which the notes (*svara*) and microtones (*śruti*) of a musical scale

called Meru, they are assigned to forty-nine small triangles drawn within the triangle. The conjunct consonant, KṢ, treated as an independent phoneme, is placed below the centre where H is located in the Triangle. The remaining letters are arranged in the diagram in the normal alphabetical order in an anti-clockwise spiral of three and a half turns. This is why Kuṇḍalinī, the inner form of the goddess as Speech, is likened to a serpent with three and a half coils. Each letter is worshipped as a Bhairava or a Siddha. Each one of them lives in his own compartment that is itself a Yoni, said to be 'wet' with the divine Command (*ājñā*) of the energy of the transmission that takes place through the union they enjoy with their female counterparts who reside there with them. The sacrality of sacred sites is derived from such hierogamies and so each compartment corresponds to a sacred site where these Siddhas are said to reside, practise and teach. These sites have been plotted on Maps 1 and 2. The sources of the first map is the Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* and a commentary — *ṭīkā* — on parts of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* and the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā*. The second map presents a secondary variant drawn from the *Ambāmatasaṁhitā* [29] which, like the previous source, belongs to the corpus of the Kubjikā Tantras I have edited from manuscripts. In the Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* the goddess is said to visit these fifty places.[30] Before doing so, she utters a hymn praising the four sacred seats along with another, fifth one, identified as Trisrota (site 11 on Map 1) which, she says, will be the sacred seat of a future revelation.[31] This statement

(*grāma*) are schematically represented. "The *vṛtti* on the *Bṛhaddeśī* speaks of three ways of representing the *śruti* and *svara* positions within a *grāma*. These were known as the three *prastāra*s: (1) the *daṇḍaprastāra* (2) the *vīṇāprastāra* and (3) the *maṇḍalaprastāra*" (Lath 1988: 74).

[29] The *Ambāmatasaṁhitā*, also called *Avvāmata*, is a section of the *Manthānabhairavatantra*. The reference is found on fol. 13a of the sole known manuscript of this text.

[30] The few variants in the list found in the *Ṭīkā* with respect to the KuKh (6/212cd-219ab) have been noted in Appendix 2.

[31] These are the standard four with the addition of Tisra, also called Trisrota, as the fifth. This may well be the same as Mātaṅgapīṭha mentioned in the KMT as a fifth 'pervasive' sacred seat which, as such, has no separate loca-

suggests to the modern scholar that the place was already a sacred site and that it was one of such special importance for the initiates of the Kubjikā Tantras that they integrated it, somewhat haphazardly, into the older scheme that enjoyed a high degree of prestige in other Tantric traditions also. Another source informs us that the order in which the letters are placed within the triangular diagram (*varṇanyāsa*) corresponds to the sequence (*gati*) of the sacred seats. And this is, indeed, the order in which they are listed in the Kumārikākhaṇḍa [32] of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* as the places the goddess converts into sacred sites (*āyatana, tīrtha, saṁdoha*) by visiting and casting her empowering gaze upon them in one of her colonizing rounds of India.

Just as the goddess Kubjikā moves around India to establish her sacred sites, she also moves through this Triangle — the Yoni — which is her own body — the Body of Energy (*kulapiṇḍa*) — sanctifying its parts by filling them with the energy of empowerment (*ājñā*). Although the texts do not say so explicitly, they imply that the triangular land of Bhārata is just that portion of the Virgin Goddess.[33]

tion. In the account found in the KuKh (chapter six), the consort of the goddess is Mātaṅga. The goddess would therefore be Mātaṅgī, which may account for its alternative name. This is the sacred seat of the future revelation. Thus the goddess says to the god: "O handsome one, I have told you this, the descent (into the world) of the (four) sacred seats and the sacred seat called Tisra that is considered to be the fifth future one." (KuKh 6/189cd-190ab) The latter is symbolically located above the triangle formed by the other four seats in the form of a point "above the Half Moon". This sacred seat has emerged on top of the triangular Yoni, above the Half Moon. The supreme Kālī, who illumines divine knowledge, is located there. The original triangle, which is the shape of the letter E in the script of the time, is thus converted into the mantric syllable AIṂ.

[32] KuKh 6/212cd-219ab.

[33] We read in the Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* that "there are sacred sites (*āyatana* and other sacred places), *tīrthas* and *saṁdohas*, wherever the goddess went and wherever she cast her gaze. O mother of Kula, (the goddess thus) established her fame in the land of Bhārata, and so the meritorious and holy Region of the Virgin (*kaumārikākhaṇḍa*) came into being." (KuKh 6/219cd-221ab = KMT 2/117-218)

At the same time this, the female body, is that of the core reality; conversely, its complement, the outer body, is male. This relationship is established to allow for the exteriorization of the letters and so, by extension, the sacred sites onto the surface of the body. In this case, the Triangle contains the goddesses of the female form of the alphabet, which is itself a goddess called Mālinī (lit. 'Garlanded One', i.e. the goddess who wears the Garland of Letters). The figure of a standing man identified with a form of a Bhairava (or Siddha) called Śrīkaṇṭha (who is the guardian of the first letter of the alphabet) is the male form of the alphabet called Śabdarāśi — the Aggregate of Words. This is the male Person (*puruṣa*) who resides within Nature identified, by implication, with the Triangle. In this way the Triangle with the letters it contains, the Bhairavas that preside over them, and the places that symbolically enshrine their energies can be projected onto the body (see Fig. 2).

An interesting consequence of these symbolic associations is that the letters that are extracted from the Triangle to form mantras are not only pervasive sounds and deities, but also places. Accordingly, we occasionally find in the Kubjikā Tantras that the letters extracted from the triangular diagram to form mantras are labelled with the name of the place to which they symbolically correspond rather than the Siddha or Bhairava, which is much more common. In this perspective, this means that mantras are interiorizations of sacred places. This startling symbolic association is the result of an important principle, namely, that each deity must be associated with a place in order to be effectively immanent and hence an object of the worship by which it is propitiated to bestow its gifts. Thus the deities of the letters of a mantra, which is the sonic icon of its presiding deity, in order to be effective and hence render the mantra effective, must carry along within themselves their own divine locations.

We should note before proceeding further that the first two maps are derived from two substantially different lists of the fifty sites collocated in the triangle. The first is found in the Kumārikākhanda of the *Manthānabhairavatantra*. This is the same list, with minor variants, as the one in the *Ṭīkā*.[34] The other list is found in the

[34] This unpublished text is a commentary compiled by a certain Rūpaśiva on scattered chapters of the Kubjikā Tantras. Several sections are simply whole-

Ambāmatasaṁhitā. The Triangle, with its fifty compartments, is described in the earliest Tantra of the Kubjikā school, the *Kubjikāmata*, but it does not equate them with sacred places as happens in the Kumārikākhanda.[35] The section of the *Ṭīkā* which presents this group of fifty sites and equates them with the letters placed in the Triangle is not presented as a commentary on any specifically named text, but examination of the contents of the *Ṭīkā* clearly establishes that it postdates the Kumārikākhanda. We can therefore safely conclude that this group of fifty sites was introduced after the redaction of the KMT and was subsequently fitted into the Triangle formed by the four primary sacred seats that is already well elaborated in the KMT. Although the list of fifty sites found in the *Ambāmatasaṁhitā* is similar, it is substantially different from this one, not just a variant. It presents an ulterior elaboration of this scheme and so can be safely assumed to postdate the Kumārikākhanda. The fact that the number of places listed makes exactly fifty clearly indicates that they have been compiled and standardized for a specific purpose and are not simply lists of sacred sites.

That the list in the Kumārikākhanda, in particular, is a standard one is confirmed by the fact that it appears, with just a few variant entries, in the *Yoginīhṛdaya*, which is an important Tantra of the Tripurā cult. All of these texts are certainly prior to the 12th century.

sale copies of the commentary on various chapters of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* (both of which are also largely unpublished). The latter is an expanded version in 6,000 verses of the *Kubjikāmatatantra* consisting of 3,500 verses. For a basic table comparing the contents of these two texts, see Schoterman 1982: 14ff.

[35] Although implied in the first reference in the KuKh noted already (footnote 32 above), the collocation of the sites within the Triangle is only made explicit in KuKh 51/22. There, after having listed the fifty sites again, the text says: "These are said to be the sacred seats which are extolled as (the group of) fifty. They have arisen in accord with the sequence of emanation by moving in an anti-clockwise direction." We have noted already that the letters are projected into the Triangle in the same anti-clockwise direction and so it is clear that the text here implies that these site are to be projected into it in the same way. We should note in passing that the passage KuKh 51/15cd-25ab is probably drawn from YKh (2) 24/1-10 where this short section is aptly labelled *pīṭhameruprastāra*.

As we have noted already, the KMT belongs to at least the 11th century. The *Yoginīhṛdaya* contains many notions elaborated by Kashmiri Śaivites between the 9th and 11th centuries.[36] However, there is no certain mention of the text prior to the 13th century.[37] Moreover, Amṛtānanda, who states that his commentary was the first ever made on the YHṛ, probably lived in the late 13th or in the 14th century in South India.[38] Another indication of its relatively recent origin is its high degree of domestication. The liturgy centred on the worship of Śrīcakra that it expounds can be performed entirely in one place — at home, in a temple or monastery — by a householder or non-itinerant ascetic. Unlike the Kubjikā Tantras and Abhinava's

[36] Padoux (1994: 15) lists some of them. But note that, although there is a similarity in many respects with non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivism, important fundamental notions of that system that are missing in the YHṛ itself are supplimented by Amṛtānanda in his commentary. Thus, for example, Padoux points out that Amṛtānanda "characterises *śakti* by *vimarśa*, the supreme godhead being *prakāśavimarśamaya*. The term *vimarśa*, typical of Kṣemarāja's Pratyabhijñā, is not found in the YHṛ itself" (*ibid.* p.15). This means that the most fundamentally characterizing feature of non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivism namely, its conception of ultimate reality and the Self as an energetic, self-reflective 'I-ness' (*ahaṁbhāva*) consisting of presentation (*prakāśa*) and reflective awareness (*vimarśa*), is missing. Thus, the world view in the YHṛ is strangely reminiscent of the early forms of non-dual Kashmiri Śaivism which were similarly devoid of this fundamental notion (see above, chapter 1). We find the same is the case with the metaphysics of Vāmanadatta, a non-dualist Vaiṣṇava who lived in Kashmir during the early period of the development of Kashmiri Śaivism (see above, chapter 3). However, we should not be too hasty in assigning an early date to the YHṛ on this basis. There are passages in the YHṛ that reflect Kṣemarāja's version of the Pratyabhijñā (Padoux 1994: 10 n. 5 referring to Sanderson). One of them, at least, comes very close to the notion of "I-ness" to which I am referring (i.e verse 1/56) but does not go all the way. Nonetheless, here we have evidence that the YHṛ post-dates Kṣemarāja who, as Abhinavagupta's most distinguished disciple, lived into the middle or second half of the 11th century.

[37] Jayaratha, who lived in 13th century Kashmir, quotes some five verses from the YHṛ in his commentary on the *Vāmakeśvaramata* (also called *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava*). This, Padoux tells us, is the earliest mention of this text (Padoux 1994: 10).

[38] Ibid., p. 12.

Tantrāloka, it makes no provisions at all for the possibility of any real peregrination to these sites, not even as a secondary alternative or along with their projection on the body. Thus, as in the *Tantrāloka*, in which Abhinavagupta, a master of the theory and practice of interiorization, expounds a thoroughly domesticated cult, the projection of these sacred sites onto the body is of relatively minor importance.

According to the liturgy of the *Yoginīhṛdaya*, the placing of the fifty seats on the body is the sixth of a sixfold projection onto the body that is done at the beginning of the rite. The first of these depositions is that of fifty Gaṇeśas, one for each letter of the alphabet. This is done to remove obstacles to the performance of the rite. Then comes a deposition of the nine planets and twenty-seven constellations (*nakṣatra*). The six Yoginīs presiding over the six Wheels (*cakra*) within the body come next. They govern the gross elements and mind along with the physical constituents of the body (*dhātu*). They are accompanied by an entourage of fifty Yoginīs who govern the fifty letters of the alphabet, the phonemic equivalents of the forces within the Wheels that operate within the adept's cosmic body. Once the inner, subtle body has been energized in this way, the fifth deposition is performed, which is that of the twelve signs of the zodiac (*rāśi*). Thus, the outer body has been freed of obstacles, transformed into the universe, and its central vitalizing axis is energized. Finally, this process is completed by the projection of the fifty sacred sites, corresponding to the letters, onto the surface of this cosmic body. In this way, the body is prepared as a pure, cosmic and energized surface of inscription onto which the adept projects the Śrīcakra in which he will worship and become one with his deity. Thus Śrīcakra is drawn on the whole of the sacred land of Bhārata, which is set in the spheres of the cosmic forces with which it is vitally linked and forms an essential part.

From the point of view of the present inquiry, there is one important feature of this group of fifty places. Not only are the individual places the same as those found in the Kubjikā Tantras, but the order in which they are listed is such that when they are projected onto a triangular grid in the manner prescribed in the Kubjikā Tantras, we find the main sacred seats — Kāmarūpa, Jālandhara, Pūrṇagiri

and Uḍḍiyāna — in the corners and centre, in the way noted above. The Śrīvidyā system does not utilise this grid and so this serial order is of no consequence for it. This leads one to suppose that the group has been lifted wholesale from the Kubjikā Tantras or a common source. However, the latter possibility would only be a feasible option if other early Tantric systems had the same grid as the one found in the Kubjikā Tantras with these sites projected into it. Up to now none has been found although the use of grids of this sort to extract the letters of mantras is not uncommon practice. We can observe it in the Tantras of various schools. Their shapes may vary as does the manner in which the letters are distributed within them. Thus the *Śrīrasamahodadhi*, for example, quoted by Jayaratha in his commentary on the *Vāmakeśvaramata*, describes a similar triangular grid. But the arrangement of the letters within it differs from the one in the grid we are examining.[39] Indeed, despite the importance of the *Meruprastāra* in the Kubjikā Tantras, it is not common in other Tantric sources. The only other place I have been able to trace it so far is in a Buddhist Tantric text. This is the *Tattvajñānasaṁsiddhi* by Śūnyasamādhivajra whose original name was Divākaracandra. His teacher was Paiṇḍapātika, also called Avadhūtapāda. Significantly, perhaps, Śūnyasamādhivajra is said to have written this work without the permission of his teacher. Is this because he drew from Tantras of other schools? If so, were Kubjikā Tantras among his sources?[40]

Moreover, there can be little doubt that the projection of the main sites onto the grid is a development that took place in the Kubjikā Tantras. The first description found in the Kubjikā Tantras of how this grid should be drawn occurs in chapter four of the KMT (4/75-80). This chapter of the KMT is drawn directly from the *Tantrasadbhāva*, which is an important Trika Tantra.[41] If we compare

[39] See p. 45 of the Sanskrit text and Finn 1986: 238 n. 320 for a diagram of this grid.

[40] See Banārasī Lāl 2000: 43 - 72.

[41] Chapters four, five and six of the KMT are basically chapters three, six and eight of the TS. See Goudriaan and Schoterman 1988: 488ff. for a table of some of the major variants between the readings in the two texts. The same authors have established that the redactor of the KMT certainly had the TS before him. See ibid. p. 15-16.

the equivalent passage in the TS we notice that although the description of how the grid should be drawn is essentially the same, a few lines that follow concerning the placement of the letters within it have been significantly altered in the KMT. Thus in the TS we read:

"Deposit the group of vowels starting from the north-east in (the regular alphabetical) sequence (into the grid). At the end of that (series of vowels, deposit) the consonants (in due order) until they reach the centre (of the grid). The god called Haṁsa (i.e. the letter HA), the great soul, is in the abode of Brahmā (in the centre)."

Whereas the KMT says:

"Write (the letters) beginning with the letter A from Kāmarūpa (onwards) in this way successively. The vowels and consonants (should be written) according to the shape (of the triangle *yathāvṛtti*) until they reach the centre. O goddess, the great called Haṁsa of the great soul is in Oḍḍiyāna."[42]

The identification of the starting point, that is, the lower corner of the downward pointing triangle with Kāmarūpa and the centre with Uḍḍiyāna is enough for the adept, as it is for us, to infer the presence of the other seats in the remaining corners.[43] Thus there can be no doubt that the presence of the main sacred seats was inducted into the triangle of letters originally described in the TS, a major Trika Tantra. Finally, the texts themselves confirm that, when they were compiled, this triangle, symbolically called the Island of the Moon, with these sacred seats from which the Siddhas were said to have promulgated the teachings, was specific to the Final Tradition (*paścimāmnāya*), that is, the Kubjikā Tantras.[44] Thus in one of them we read:

[42] The Sanskrit of these two passages is as follows:

īśānyādi krameṇaiva sannyaset [*k kh g: sabhyaset*] *svaramaṇḍalaṁ* || *100* ||
tasyānte tu tataḥ [*k kh g: tata*] *sparśā yāvan madhyam upāgatāḥ* [*kh: -tā*] |
brahmasthānagataṁ devaṁ haṁsākhyaṁ tu mahātmanaḥ || *101* ||
TS 3/100cd-101

kāmarūpād akārādau likhed evaṁ krameṇa tu |
svarāḥ sparśā yathāvṛttyā yāvan madhyam upāgatāḥ ||
oḍḍiyānagataṁ devi haṁsākhyaṁ tu mahātmanaḥ | KMT 4/79-80ab.

[43] See figure 1 on p. 169.

[44] See footnote 55.

"The Gestures (*mudrā*), the Siddhas and the four sacred seats, have (all) been brought down (to earth) onto the Island of the Moon (i.e. the triangular *maṇḍala*). Little known in (any) other school (*darśana*), they are the main (features) of the Final Tradition."[45]

Now we have established the priority of the Kubjikā Tantras as the source of this interiorized geography and have seen that from an original simple model of three or four seats arranged in the corners of a triangle it developed into one containing fifty which the *Yoginīhṛdaya* subsequently took it over. Thus it appears that by that time this set was considered to be, at least by the author of the *Yoginīhṛdaya*, a standard one. This suggests that by the 11th or 12th century, when these manipulations were being elaborated, pilgrimage by Tantric initiates to these sites was already becoming redundant. Finally, by the time the *Yoginīhṛdaya* was written, it may well have become totally so. What remained was the projection onto the body and other techniques of transposition that served, amongst other things, as a means of purifying the adept. We have seen how this worked in the case of the Tantric system taught in the *Yoginīhṛdaya*; let us now return to the *Niśisaṁcāratantra*, and see how it functions there.

Abhinavagupta chooses this as his source for the sacred sites that are projected onto the body of the neophyte as a part of the preliminary rites of purification that form the prelude to the rite of initiation. This deposition is performed immediately after the ritual bathing and precedes the important deposition of the letters onto the body. Abhinava is following a model already formed for him in the Tantras themselves. The projection of the sacred sites onto the body serves to transform it into a sacred universe, the geography of which is marked by these sacred sites. We have already noted that according to the *Niśisaṁcāra* the ultimate goddess site (*pīṭha*) is Śiva's will, which is identified with the most important sacred seat, namely, Kāmarūpa. The cosmogonic Sound (*nāda*) and the primordial, dimensionless Point (*bindu*) from which the cosmic process unfolds are the sacred seats of Pūrṇagiri and Uḍḍiyāna. Similarly, the three subsidiary seats (*upapīṭha*) are said to be Kuṇḍalinī and the first derivatives of Sound and the Point. Externally, these three correspond to Devīkoṭa,

[45] *mudrāḥ siddhāś catuḥ pīṭhāś candradvīpe 'vatāritāḥ |*
pradhānāḥ paścimāmnāye aprasiddhānyadarśane || KuKh 60/70

Kollāgiri, and Ujjayinī. This is followed by another triad, that of the three *saṁdohakas*.[46] These are the sense of taste (*lalanā*, lit. 'the tongue'), a tertiary derivation of the Point (*bindu*) and Pervasion (*vyāpti*), from which sacred energy emanates. These correspond to Puṇḍravardhana, Vārendra and Ekāmra, respectively. Around these three triads, arranged on the eight petals of the 'lotus of the heart', are twenty-four more sacred places. They are eight primary sacred fields (*kṣetra*), eight secondary ones (*upakṣetra*) and eight secondary *saṁdoha*s. These three groups are located on the main part of the petals, the tips and joints between them, respectively.

A grouping in three sets of eight and projection onto a lotus in a similar way is known to the Kubjikā Tantras. This developed from an original set of twenty-four sites presented without internal differentiation.[47] These are the twenty-four sites of the KMT plotted on Map 6. It is, I believe, very significant that these twenty-four places are, apart from a few minor variants, the same as those listed in the Mādhavakula section of the *Jayadrathayāmala* quoted by Abhinavagupta. Not only are the entries in the two lists virtually the same, they are practically in the same order.[48] This coincidence tells us that when these Tantras were redacted, these places were already consid-

[46] The terms *saṁdoha* and *upasaṁdoha* are of uncertain derivation. They are also found in Buddhist Tantras in this or a similar form (such as *chandoha*) (See HT 1/7/10-8). Jayaratha, the commentator on the *Tantrāloka,* derives the term from the root *saṁduh*, meaning to milk, suck, or ooze (milk). Thus he says that "a *saṁdohaka* (is what has been milked) because it consists mainly of the exuded secretion of the secondary seats" (*saṁdohaketi upapīṭhaniḥsyandaprāyatvāt* | TĀ, vol. VI p. 2489).

[47] It appears that apart from the grouping together of the most important seats, Kāmarūpa and the rest, the division of other such sites into separate subsets is neither uniform nor significant.

[48] The entries and their order coincide in the two lists up to the eighth entry in the *Jayadrathayāmala* list, namely, Śrīpīṭha. The KMT lists Śrīkoṭa. That this is another name for Devīkoṭa is confirmed by the corresponding entry in the list found in the commentary on the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* (25/8). Eḍābhī, the tenth entry in the list, corresponds to Airuḍī in the KMT. But these appear to be two names for the same place, namely, Eruṇḍī. The next entry, Hālā, which Jayaratha glosses as Alipura, replaces Hastināpura in the KMT's list. The following entry in the KMT, that is, the twelfth, is Elāpura; this is the

ered to be a standard group by at least these two traditions, one centred on the goddess Kubjikā and the other on the goddess Kālī as taught in the JY. It would be a mistake, therefore, to think of this sacred geography as being specific to any one school. The close association between the obscure goddess Kubjikā and Kālī, still maintained in the Śākta Tantrism of the Newars, and attested in numerous ways in the Kubjikā Tantras, thus finds further confirmation. Indeed, the edition and detailed analysis of the Tantras of other related schools will most probably reveal that these were places sacred to most, if not all, other Kaula and Bhairava Tantric systems.

The formation of standard sets renders their individual members easily amenable to assimilation to cosmic principles and interiorization. Let us trace the stages of this development in the case of these twenty-four sites in the Kubjikā Tantras to observe the way this process operates.

sixteenth entry according to the JY. The next entry according to the JY is Gokarṇa. The corresponding entry in the KMT is Kāśmarī, which is another name for Gokarṇa. According to the commentary on the ṢaṭSS mentioned above, this place is called Narmadā Gokarṇa while the KMT states that the goddess of Kāśmarī is Gokarṇā, which further confirms this identification. The following entry in the edited text of the KMT is Marudeśa. The corresponding entry in the JY, according to the printed edition of the *Tantrāloka* that quotes it, is Marukośa. This is a mistake for Marukeśa. The corresponding entry in the commentary in the ṢaṭSS, Marukeśvara, confirms this. The next entry in the printed edition of the KMT is Caitrakaccha, but some manuscripts read Nagara, which is the same as the corresponding entry in the JY. The corresponding entry in the commentary on the ṢaṭSS is Bhṛgunagara. The seventeenth entry in the KMT reads Parastīra; the equivalent entry in the JY is Purastīra, which is the correct spelling. This is followed by Pṛṣṭhāpura in the KMT, missing in the JY. The next variant is the nineteenth entry in the KMT, Kuhudī (comm. ṢaṭSS: Kuhuṇḍī); this corresponds to Kuḍyākeśī in the JY. Then come Sopāna in JY and Sopāra in the KMT. Sopāna is a misreading and so Sopāra is the same in both lists. This entry is followed by Kṣīrika and Māyāpurī, in that order according to the KMT and in the reverse order according to the JY. The final entry in the KMT is Rājagṛha; this is the penultimate one in the JY's list, which ends with Śrīśaila. According to the *Kulakramodaya* quoted by Jayaratha in his commentary on the *Tantrāloka* (Vol. 7, p. 3334), the Mother (Mātṛkā) Brahmāṇī was worshipped at this important site. This fact was apparently so well known that Abhinava calls this place Vairiñcī, the place of the goddess Viriñcī, that is, Brahmāṇī.

The KMT prescribes the worship of these places as atonement for inadvertently omitting some part of the worship of Kubjikā's main Maṇḍala. Such omissions are transgressions of the Rule (*samaya*), as a result of which the adept's strength fails (*glāni*) and obstacles afflict him. Worshipping these sacred places along with the goddesses who reside there, their weapons and the protectors of the field (*kṣetrapāla*) can purify the adept who has thus sullied himself. It seems that a literal pilgrimage is enjoined here because the Tantra goes on to say that if the adept cannot do this or is lazy, he can purify himself by simply praising the sacred seats.[49] The worship of these and other sites is a regular feature of all Kaula ritual. It is a major feature of the Kubjikā Tantras which, therefore, contain many such hymns dedicated to the sacred seats. In this case this means reciting the verses in the Tantra in which these twenty-four places are listed in the morning just after getting up or before going to sleep. The Tantra promises that even if the initiate has committed terrible sins, he is respected (*saṁmata*) by the Mothers (Mātṛkā) who reside there.

Moreover, the adept can recite the hymn when he is in the sacrificial area where the rites of the goddess are performed, in front of Kubjikā's Maṇḍala, her icon, or a Liṅga. He may also recite it standing in water when he makes his ablutions. In this way, we are told, calamities, poison, fire, water or disease do not overcome him.[50]

The Tantra supplies an alternative, more elaborate, method of worshipping these places if the adept is overcome by great fear (*mahābhaya*). To remedy his distress, he should fashion twenty-four circles (*maṇḍala*). These are divided into four groups of six, one group for each direction starting with the east. Flowers of various colours are offered — in the east white, south yellow, west red, and north dark blue. A jar full of water is placed in the centre. A lamp is placed in each of the twenty-four circles. The adept should then move around through these replications of the sacred seats in due order. He should do this for a day and a night. Having passed the night keeping himself well under control, he should then make offerings of meat and wine (technically called *vīrabhojya*). Then he should propitiate the sacred seats, prostrating before them repeatedly. In this way he is

[49] KMT 22/18-22.

[50] Ibid. 22/47-54ab.

freed of his fear along with other impediments and diseases. The Tantra promises that he will quickly attain success and become wealthy. If he is celibate, he will get a good wife and sons, and if he is a student, knowledge. Finally, we may note that the name of the chapter of the KMT where this is taught is appropriately called "the Pervasion of the Whole and the Parts".

The *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* presents an interesting interiorization of this replication of the twenty-four sites. In this Tantra they figure as the components of the Wheel of the Sun, which, along with those of the Fire and Moon, are the three enclosures of the Wheel of the Skyfaring Goddesses (*khecarīcakra*)[51] located in the upper extremity of the yogic body. They are divided into three groups, according to whether they are primary or secondary Sacred Fields (*kṣetra, upakṣ etra*) or meeting grounds (*saṁdoha*). The sites are arranged on the petals of the lotus in four groups of six. There are two sacred fields on the first two petals. Then there are two secondary sacred fields on the next two petals and two meeting grounds on the following two. The remaining three groups of six are placed on the remaining petals in serial order in the same way.

These twenty-four places, arranged in this way on the petals of the lotus, correspond to the twenty-four principles of existence (*tattva*) ranging from Earth to Nature (*prakṛti*). Thus a connection is made with the principles of existence that constitute the whole of empirical reality, not just the body. The pilgrimage to the sacred places takes the adept around the manifest universe. The stops on the journey are linked in a developing progression, which is at the same time, in a seemingly paradoxical manner, circular. When he reaches the upper

[51] Chapter 25 of the ṢaṭSS opens with a beautiful description of this Wheel. Bhairava says to the goddess:

"O fair-faced one! I will (now) tell (you about) the great Wheel of the Skyfaring Goddesses. (Shaped like a lotus), its sprouts are the worlds and it is adorned with the parts of Mantras (*pada*) as its leaves. It is strewn with letters that are (its) thorns and (its) holes are Mantras. Divine, it is fashioned with the threads of the cosmic forces (*kalā*) and, (resting) on the knots which are the principles of existence (*tattva*), it is firm. Possessing twenty-four petals, it extends for billions (of leagues). In the middle of the ocean of the Void (*vyoman*), it looks like blue collyrium. Shining like a thousand suns, its radiant energy is like the Fire of Time." (ṢaṭSS 25/2-5ab)

extremity, he continues beyond from the beginning again. In this perspective, there is no descent, only a continuous rising up through the spheres of manifestation from gross to subtle and subtle to gross.[52]

The establishment of a sacred geography externally and its subsequent systematic interiorization is an essential part of the formation of the complex of symbolic forms and their dynamic interaction that constitute the distinctive features of the Tantric system expounded in the Kubjikā Tantras. The goddess establishes a sacred geography to delineate her specific worldly domain and so colonize site, city, region, country and the world through her descent from the transcendent. She thereby spreads the teachings concerning her and the geography thus established and internalized in her Tantric system. In this system, as in most others of its kind, time and location serve as the prerequisites for the delineation of the specific entities that lend their identity to the energies, which are internally configured so as to replicate their concrete, external existence in ideally perfect geometric patterns and regular rhythms. These geometries and rhythms constitute the system in its complexity and, hence, its spiritual transformative power. Specific forms, places and time thus become ideal ciphers that mark the configuration and development of abstract transcendent reality, which becomes immanent at first as sacred geometries within the divine consciousness of the deity so as to constitute its Body of Energies (*kulapiṇḍa*), the latter then being replicated in the body of the adept.[53] This then is the intermediate reality that is vitalized by the universal, abstract energy from the upper transcendent reality. This energy flows out to the chaotic configurations of outer concrete entities that, by lending this energy their forms, concretize the transcendent, rendering it amenable to approach. In

[52] This material has been drawn from ṢatSS 25/2-9. Here is, it seems to me, a fine example of how pilgrimage is conceived. The pilgrim's route, rather than being a representation of the path to liberation, which would be straight, is more of the nature of a circumambulation of sacred space. This is done not to achieve liberation but to propitiate the deities of the sacred space and gain benefits thereby.

[53] The KMT explains that the teaching concerning the Body of Energies (*kulapiṇḍa*) is the practice of the Sequence of the Sacred Seats and the Body (*piṇḍa*). It is present in the world of men, as is the goddess (KMT 1/53).

this way they become intelligible because they are no longer perceived as disconnected phenomena but as parts of a greater abstract Whole which is a meaningful, albeit, complex, system.

Accordingly, the root Tantra of the Kubjikā cult begins by delineating this sacred geography, and in so doing explains the origins of the goddess herself. This starts from the goddess's land of origin, the *Santānabhuvana* — the World of the Lineage. This is presented as the 'outside world' of myth. Its three peaks, arranged in a triangle, enclose an idyllic land behind the Himalaya[54] to the west of Meru.[55] Internally this is located at the top of the Twelve Finger Space above the head (see Fig. 4). This is the hermitage of Himavat, who receives Bhairava with such devotion that the god grants him a number of boons.[56] Himavat, by way of recompense, introduces Bhairava to his daughter, the virgin (*kumārikā*) Kālikā who asks him to be the deity she worships. Bhairava responds by imparting to her a vision of the universe and insight into the energy that sustains it.

This is the divine Command (*ājñā*) that was transmitted through the six lineages of the six accomplished adepts (*siddha*) who were the disciples of Matsyendranātha, who, as we have seen, is the legendary founder of Kaulism in this age.[57] The places where the six disciples received initiation and whence they spread the teachings are listed in Tantras of different schools.[58] These places clearly belong to the geography of the early Kaula Tantras. Moreover, each disciple is also linked with a village and a sacred grove.[59] Unfortunately, these

[54] KMT 1/2, ṢaṭSS 1/6.

[55] ṢaṭSS 1/27a. The western direction noted here may possibly be connected with characterization of the Kubjikā cult as the Western Tradition.

[56] KMT 1/24f.

[57] This is what the KMT calls the 'previous tradition' (*pūrvāmnāya*). This Tantra maintains that by the time of its redaction, this tradition had decayed and so required the establishment of a new, subsequent and definitive one. This is the Kubjikā cult which is appropriately called *Paścimāmnāya* meaning, in this context, 'the last and final tradition'.

[58] Two have been compared, namely, a source belonging to the Kubjikā Tantras and the *Kulakrīḍāvatāra* that is quoted by Abhinavagupta in the *Tantrāloka,* and they have been found to agree. See Map 10.

[59] See Appendix 3 for a table displaying this information.

places have not yet been identified. This is probably because of their local character, reflecting the close relationship these pan-Indian Sanskritic traditions had with local and regional traditions. A two-fold process of domestication and interiorization marks the transition from one to the other.

Bhairava goes on to tell the goddess that her power will manifest itself in the land of the Virgin Goddess (Kumārikā), namely, India. He tells her that until she has established her authority in India — the land of Bharata — there can be no union with him. He then disappears telling her to go to Mount Kaumāra.[60] She abandons her companions and, in order to seek her god, she goes to the Mountain of the Moon, which she ascends, there to assume the form of a Liṅga in which the entire universe is enveloped. The god now begins to worship the Liṅga, called Udyānabhairava, and asks the goddess to abandon her unmanifest form. Accordingly, the goddess bursts apart the Liṅga and emerges out of it.[61] Then the goddess imparts her grace

[60] KMT 1/48-54. In the ṢaṭSS this place is identified with Śrīśaila, which is the sacred seat of Mātaṅga. Internally, it is the trunk of the body up to the neck.

[61] KMT 2/3. The theme of the goddess emerging from the Liṅga is well known. In the *Devīmāhātmya* of the *Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa* Mahāmāyā "rent open the Śiva Liṅga and came forth". The same is stated in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (76/83-93). A similar conception, namely that this primordial energy comes from the Person (*puruṣa*) is found in the *Bhagavadgītā* (15/4). The idea is well known to the Śaivasiddhānta, according to which spheres of energy (*kalā*) emerge from the Liṅga. Śrīcakra is also worshipped in association with the Liṅga and is sometimes even drawn on it. Banerjee (1974: 508) tells us that a "unique image was discovered in the ruins of Vikrampur, within the limits of the ancient capital of the Senas and their predecessors, in the quarter of the town known as Kagajipara." He goes on to descibe it as "four feet in height. It shows in its lower part a well-carved Śivaliṅga, from the top of which emerges the half-length figure of a four-armed goddess with her front hands in the *dhyānamudrā*, the back hands carrying a rosary and a manuscript. The Devī is profusely ornamented, and her beautifully carved youthful face with three eyes has a serene meditative expression." It is reproduced in Plate XLV, 2 of Banerjee's book. He identifies it as Mahāmāyā. The iconography Banerjee describes corresponds to that of the goddess Parā. Although this figure may not be that of the goddess Kubjikā, who is frequently identified with both Parā and Mahāmāyā, she could well be depicted in this way.

to the god. Then she goes to various places where she recruits the resident goddess who, 'sporting' (sexually) with a Siddha, an aspect of Bhairava, generates spiritual sons and daughters.

The first place the goddess visits is the Kula mountain. This is Śrīparvata, called Kumāra. When the goddess looks at it, Śrī, the goddess of royal power and wealth, suddenly becomes manifest, so it is called Śrīśaila. She draws a line on the ground with her toe and so creates a river that serves as a boundary. She establishes the goddess Chāyā there and gives her the command that whoever enters that sacred area will be her equal. The goddess continues her journey to Mount Trikūṭa and then to Mount Kiṣkindha. In these places she gives the power of her command and graces the demons who protect them (*rākṣasa*). She then goes to the shore of the ocean, where she stands for a while, and so there she is Kanyākumārī. Then, having graced the ocean, she goes to a cave called Daradaṇḍi. There the goddess assumes the form of Shade (*chāyādharī*), her mind set on the Unmanifest.

She then goes a long distance to the western Himagahvara. The forest goddess (*vanapallikā*)[62] Olambikā resides there. The goddess is pleased and declares that this place is called Uḍḍiyāna because she flew up into the sky there.[63] She resides there in the Kṛta Age along with her consort Uḍḍamaheśa, who is Mitrānanda, a founder of the Kubjikā tradition. There, she is called Raktacāmuṇḍā.[64] She then goes to Karāla. The place is said to be brilliant with radiant energy; it is therefore renamed Jālandhara, the place of the flame — *jvāla*. The burning radiance of the goddess's flames has been awakened and she sees countless marvelous creations like those produced by magic (*indrajāla* — here too, apparently, an etymology is implied). She wonders what this marvelous creation is. She is told that although she has fallen because of the god's great energy, she has not fled from it and so she is addressed as the one who extends the net (*jāla*) of Māyā. She is told that she will be given lordship over Jālandhara. In this role she is called Karālī and her consort in the Tretā Age is Siddhakauṇḍalī.[65]

[62] Alternatively, a *vanapallikā* may be a small village in the jungle.

[63] *uḍḍitā yena aṅgribhyāṁ tenedaṁ uḍḍiyānakam* | KMT 2/40cd.

[64] Ibid. 2/40-9.

[65] Ibid. 2/50-63ab.

The goddess then goes to the great forest called Sahya. There, she fills the three worlds with the flames of her halo and is called Caṇḍākṣī. As all things are filled this way, she is addressed as one who is 'full' of all things (*pūrṇarūpiṇī*). By virtue of the Yoga (*viṣuva-yoga*) by which she has done all this, she becomes the mistress of the mountain which is identified with Pūrṇagiri. Her authority is exerted at the end of the Dvāpara Age. Her consort is Cakrānanda.[66] The goddess then goes to a place called Kāmika. There is a river there called Ucchuṣmā, there in the forest of Mahocchuṣma. In the same forest there are two lakes. One is called Mahāhrada and the other Nīla. Here the Great Goddess again meets the local goddess, who is "melting with passion and melts the three worlds with (her) desire". Kubjikā is pleased to see her and names her Kāmeśvarī — the 'Mistress of Passion'. She explains that the nature of the sacred seat where Kāmeśvarī resides is her passion itself (*kāmarūpa*) and so this place is the sacred seat Kāmarūpa where the goddess Kāmeśvarī resides in the Age of Strife (*kaliyuga*). Her consort will be Candrānanda. Seated on the Wind and passionate, he is Kāmadeva — the God of Love himself. This completes the formation of the four main sacred seats.[67]

The god goes on to talk of a fifth sacred seat (associated with the Kula of Mātaṅga) which is located in the northern part of Lake Nīla in the forest of Mahocchuṣma, located in Madhyadeśa. The whole universe is generated from it. This sacred seat is said to be located in the middle, above the sacred seat of Kāma. It is filled with three streams (*srotas*), and so the goddess there is Trisrotā and her form is that of a river.[68] Presumably, this place is the Trisrota referred to previously.

The goddess then goes to the eight places where the Eight Mothers (Mātṛkā) are located (see Map 7). Not only Tantric meeting grounds (*saṁdoha*) but also sacred bathing places (*tīrtha*) are created wherever the goddess goes and casts her gaze. The virgin goddess — Kumārikā — thus spreads her fame throughout the land of Bhārata, so that it becomes a veritable part of the goddess (*kumārikākhaṇḍa*).[69]

[66] Ibid. 2/63cd-81.

[67] Ibid. 2/82-100.

[68] Ibid. 2/101-11.

[69] Ibid. 2/118.

Once she has completed her journey around India she can unite with the god. We are told that this takes place repeatedly. The god of the previous lineage gives the goddess the command to travel around India, and then when she returns to the same place she couples with the god who is the Great Lord of Oḍḍu.[70] He again tells her to travel around India and then to return to the sacred seat of Uḍu where she should create the universe repeatedly countless times. Then the god disappeared in an instant.

It appears at first sight that the goddess is travelling all around India to visit the major Śākta sites. In fact the story of this pilgrimage records, at least from when she reaches Himagahvara, the local replication of pan-Indian sites, especially the most important of them — the four sacred seats. The phenomenon of replication, which is fun-

[70] This is according to KuKh 6/223cd-225. The reading of the name of the god who resides in this place according to the KMT (2/121-2), where these verses originate, is Oḍramaheśāna (MS C: oḍraṁ-; D: oddra-; FH: odra-) and the name of the place Uḍḍapīṭha (MSs CK: oḍra-; HJ: oḍḍra-; D: utta-). The place where the teachings were originally propagated is called Uḍapīṭha in KuKh 7/59b. It is here that the three Siddhas, Oḍḍīśanātha, Ṣaṣṭhanātha and Mitranātha, received knowledge. As the first of these presides over Oḍḍiyāna, this may imply that Uḍapīṭha should be distinguished from that. But the texts imply that the first of these three remained where the original transmission took place, whereas the other two went to two other seats which they founded namely, Ṣaṣṭhanātha to Pūrṇagiri and Mitranātha to Kāmarūpa. Thus we read in the Ykh (1) 14/16 that "(the sacred seat of Oṁ is placed first ... I praise (this) the first sacred seat". In the next line it is called Uḍupīṭha. The same lines appear in Ykh (2) 5/18a. There the spelling is Oḍī. The variety of spellings of this place name add to the confusion. There can be little doubt, however, that we should not distinguish between an original seat and Oḍḍiyāna/ Oḍa. However, the range of spellings is probably not just the result of copists' errors, although this is a factor. It may well be an indication of some confusion in the tradition itself which was propense, it seems to me, to make the land of Oḍra, that is, Orissa, an important, if not original, site of the spread of the teachings. One could reasonably speculate that this confusion was related to an uncertainty as to the location of Oḍī (= Oḍḍiyāna), which was a very prestigious site. Jñānanetra, the founder of the branch of the Kālīkrama that associated itself with the Uttarapīṭha (the Northern Seat), is said to have received the original transmission in this place. It is identified in the Kālīkrama Tantras with Oḍḍiyāna. Moreover, as happens in the Kubjikā

damental to Purāṇic sacred geography, is no less so in its Tantric counterpart. Thus the goddess reveals various aspects of herself in the places she visits and thereby replicates the location where this aspect is present in the macrocosmic India. She also infuses the local goddess with her power as the Great Pan-Indian Goddess and so, as the Śakti of śakti, she becomes her essential nature. Another important feature of her colonizing tour is the hierogamies that take place in the individual places with aspects of the male deity, embodied in the adept who resides there. These unions, which are the source of the spiritual power of these places, generate the goddess's spiritual offspring, who form what the texts variously call a household (*gṛha*), lineage (*anvaya, santati*) or clan (*gotra*) through which the teaching is transmitted.

A further development in the definition of the location of these places took place in the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā,* where they are projected onto the head. This has been graphically represented in Figure 4. Worth noting is the position of the four major sacred seats, Oḍḍiyāna (also called Uḍra) in the ears, Jālandhara in the mouth, Pūrṇagiri in the uvula and Kāmarūpa in the eyes. This is because, the Tantra tells

Tantras, it is also called the Oṁkārapīṭha (see Dyczkowski 1988: 182). The Kubjikā Tantras seem to know about these connections with the Kālīkrama because the goddess in Uḍu / Oḍīpīṭha is said to be Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī (Ykh (1) 14/17) who is the main form of the goddess in the Kālīkrama. But somehow, it seems, the land of Oḍra continued to come to the mind of those who contributed to the development of the Kubjikā Tantras and so in the KMT there is some uncertainty. Finally, note that the name of the sixth chapter of the KuKh where these teachings are given is 'the Pervasion of the Sacred Seat of the Command'. According to the *Saṁketapaddhati* quoted by Vidyānanda in his commentary on the NṢA, the *Artharatnāvali*, the 'Seat of the Command' (*ājñāpīṭha*) is Oḍupīṭha. Vidyānanda explains that Paramaśiva in the form of Caryānātha presides there with his consort Kāmeśvarī. She selects the three Siddhas, Oḍḍīśa, Ṣaṣṭha and Mitra, and places them in authority in the three seats of Pūrṁagiri, Jālandhara and Kāmarūpa, respectively (NṢA p. 220). This is an appropriate way of describing this place as it is from here that the goddess sets out to create all the other sacred sites. This is also the first seat into which the god and goddess are said to have entered 'together', at the beginning of chapter six of the KuKh where it is called Uḍi (KuKh 6/6a) and unequivocally explained to be Uḍḍiyāna (= Oḍḍiyāna). Thus, this is the First Seat (*ādyapīṭha*) which is consistently recognised by the texts to be Oḍḍiyāna, and so should not be confused with Oḍra, that is, Orissa.

us, these four seats manifest when the goddess wishes to hear, speak, thrive and see, respectively. Sacred place is thus interiorized into the cognitive processes and metabolism. Two rivers flow from the Mahocchuṣma Forest located in the Cavity of Brahmā at the top of the head into the two lakes represented by the eyes. Above the Cavity of Brahmā is an inverted pyramid that resonates with a series of energies culminating with the Transmental (*unmanī*) at the base of the pyramid. Thus the rivers that flow from the Cavity of Brahmā represent the flow of spiritualizing energy that vitalizes sight.

The culmination of this sacred geography is the upper triangle that forms the base of the pyramid (see Fig. 5). This triangle is significantly equated with a place called Candrapura, which the texts tell us is the "home of the Paścima (i.e. Kubjikā Tantras)" (*paścimagṛha*), and so is represented as the Vulva (*yoni*) of the goddess which is this tradition (*paścimāmnāya*) itself. This interiorized representation of place is typical of the innumerable references to Candrapura, variously interiorized and otherwise used as a key symbol in the Kubjikā Tantras. The triangle emanates a circle called the Seat of Yoga (*yogapīṭha*), and the latter is identified with the main Maṇḍala of the Kubjikā Tantras, namely, the Saṁvartāmaṇḍala. This is an interiorization of two locations. One is Candraparvata (the Mountain of the Moon) and the other is Candradvīpa (the Island of the Moon). Candraśīlā (the Moon Rock) is in the centre and within it is Candraguhā (the Cave of the Moon). All these 'places' — mountain, island, rock, and cave — are linked with the goddess.

No less frequent is the association the later Kubjikā Tantras make between the goddess and the land of Koṅkaṇa.[71] This is a long strip of land along the western coast of India known as the Western Ghāṭs (see Map 2) that includes, in its southern part, the area nowadays familiar as Goa. Candrapura, located in the north of this region, was for several hundred years, up to the middle of the 11th century, the capital of Koṅkana. This place is now called Chandor and is located in what is now west-central Mahārāṣṭra.

[71] Thus, for example, the Kumārikākhaṇḍa of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* declares: "Again, the Mother known as Kamalā (Lotus) descended (to earth) in Koṅkaṇa. That, indeed, is authority made clearly manifest in Koṅkaṇa." (KuKh 17/43cd-44)

We know of another Candrapura that fits the description found in the earliest Kubjikā Tantra, the KMT, which unlike the later Kubjikā Tantras makes hardly any reference to Koṅkaṇa.[72] This was an important town in what is now the Garhwal district of the western Himalaya. Not far from it is a mountain called Candraparvata (the Mountain of the Moon). Moreover, the erratic identification of these places at times with Candradvīpa (the Island of the Moon), further confuses the picture. Candradvīpa is an island in the Bay of Bengal well known as the place where, according to a myth familiar to most early Kaula schools,[73] including the Kubjikā Tantras, Matsyendranātha overheard Śiva teaching Kaula doctrine to his consort. The similarity of these names, the prestige of these places and the strong lunar qualities of the goddess may have combined to create a composite mythical location made up of the combined replication of these three places.

But whether these places can be located or not, the fact that the projections onto the head taught by the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* produce the forced symmetry they do is an indication of the original, external existence of these places. Thus compare and contrast the projection of the four main sacred seats along the axis of the body up to the neck,[74]

[72] The only connection the goddess has with Koṅkaṇa in the KMT is her identity as Koṅkaṇāvvā (7/39) or Koṅkaṇeśānyā (7/18c, 30), the presiding goddess of the Weapon (*astra*), the last of the six limbs (*aṅga*) of her Vidyā. These are the sole references to this place in the KMT. This fact is in sharp contrast with the frequent eulogies of this place along with the Dakṣiṇāpatha (i.e. the Deccan) found in the later Kubjikā Tantras, especially the KuKh and YKh of the MBT.

[73] See introduction to Bagchi 1934.

[74] KMT 14/7-11 says that this standard set of four places is located in the body as follows: 1) Oḍḍiyāna — (the genitals?) below the navel; 2) Jālandhara — stomach; 3) Pūrṇagiri — heart; and 4) Kāmarūpa — throat. The *Ciñciṁīmatasārasamuccaya*, a late Kubjikā Tantra, illustrates the ease with which it is possible to produce a symmetrical projection of the sacred seats onto the face. The method, the Tantra tells us, is drawn from the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, a prime authority for the Trika Tantrism Abhinavagupta expounds in the *Tantrāloka*. This Tantra, in this case at least, substitutes Oṁkārapīṭha (perhaps Oṁkāreśvara in modern Madhya Pradesh) for Oḍḍiyāna. As the projection requires the simultaneous display of ritual gestures (*mudrā*) it cannot be brought about by touching the

prescribed by the KMT. This is a perfectly symmetrical arrangement — which is certainly because it is purely ideal. One could hazard to say that, for the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā*, the body serves as the locus of projection for the pan-Indian macrocosm and the head for its localized replication. Perhaps because the latter was no longer functional by the time of the redaction of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* or because the cult had spread from its place of origin, the author of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* chose to internalize it. He thus integrated the local geography into the overall system of interiorization of its macrocosmic counterpart that had already taken place in the KMT.

Despite the thoroughness with which the sites and all that had to do with pilgrimage had been internalized, until the 10th or 11th century (the probable time of the redaction of the earliest Kubjikā Tantras), if not later, the injunction to actually visit these places was not modified. The following passage from a Kubjikā Tantra not only encourages the worship of the sacred seats, which can be done anywhere, but tells us of the fruits of visiting them in the standard style of pilgrimage texts:

"He who constantly worships the transmission (*krama*) of the sacred seats that has come down through the sequence of the series (of teachers — *pāramparyakrama*), having known it thus, is himself Bhairava directly apparent. He who does the round of the sacred seats, whether he be a teacher (*ācārya*) or an adept (*sādhaka*), is liberated. He is Śiva directly apparent, he is (a true) member of the tradition and the best of teachers. By resorting (*sevana*) to the sacred seats, all (one's) countless sins are destroyed, whether one has committed brahminicide a thousand times (or even) if one has killed a myriad cows. So one should worship the four seats constantly. The desire of one (who does) so becomes an accomplishment (*siddhi*) and he is dear to the yoginīs." [75]

respective parts of the body, as is usually done. Instead, the Tantra prescribes that one must look at these locations, that is, visualize them there, in a manner reminiscent of how the goddess sacralizes sites by the energy of her gaze.

The four sacred seats are located in the head as follows: 1) Oṁkāra — mouth; 2) Jāla — right ear; 3) Pūrṇa — left ear; 4) Kāmarūpa — tip of the nose (CMSS 7/34). In this way a triangle is projected onto the face with Kāmarūpa in the centre.

[75] KuKh 6/191cd-5ab.

That the injunction to visit these places should be taken literally is further reinforced by the warning that follows that the adept who goes or resides in these places should not be proud.[76] Peregrination to the sacred places is variously termed. It may be simply called a 'wandering' (*aṭana, bhramaṇa*). This may be associated with the pious wandering of the ascetic in search of alms (*bhikṣāṭana*)[77] and, especially, begging for alms in the eight sacred Kaula places listed below. Accordingly, these places are called 'sacred seats of peregrination' (*aṭanapīṭha*). They are also the residences of goddesses, accomplished adepts and Tantric partners who are represented as low-caste women or close female relatives. From this point of view they are called 'houses' (*gṛha, ghara, veśman*). Thus, according to the Kubjikā Tantras, the eight major Kaula sacred sites each have a house occupied by a woman of low caste who is identified with a Mother (Mātṛkā), as recorded in the following table[78] and plotted on Map 7. The second entry in bold records the identifications made by the *Mādhavakula* and the *Devyāyāmala*, both Kālī Tantras that prescribe the worship of Kālasaṁkarṣaṇī as the supreme form of Kālī.[79]

[76] "The Kaula adept (*vīra*) who has entered Oḍḍiyāna and cultivates pride (there) becomes poor and dies; (indeed) he lives (barely) for a month. A thief, river or terrible disease kills the deluded soul who is given to pride in Jālandhara. He lives for (only) six months and dies along with his relatives. Or, again, he who despises (others) in the sacred seat (called) Pūrṇa and is proud dies by fire or else dies in the fifth month in a fierce battle. A blow by an invisible hammer falls on the head of one who, seated comfortably in Kāmarūpa, acts proudly. He dries up along with his body and dies in the middle of the lunar fortnight. The teacher, O handsome one, who has been proud will go to hell." (KuKh 6/196cd-202ab)

[77] KuKh 16/1-2.

[78] The identifications of the resident low-caste women (who are referred to as goddesses) with the Eight Mothers (Mātṛkā) is according to KuKh 16/13-5. The identification of these female beings with the Mothers may not be an original part of the teachings of the Kubjikā Tantras. There are several places in the Kubjikā Tantras where these eight places with their low-caste residents are listed as a group, with occasional variants, without associating them with the Mothers. This is the case in the KMT (25/90-5ab), which is certainly the oldest of the Kubjikā Tantras and also, for example, in KuKh 14/78-80. The latter source supplies the inner equivalents (*adhyātma*). Note also that this identification is not made in the *Mādhavakula* and *Devyāyāmala*.

[79] Quoted in TĀ 29/66-7.

1) Prayāga — prostitute (*veśyā*), **sweeper** (*mātaṅgī*) — Brahmāṇī — navel
2) Varaṇā [80] — liquor seller (*śuṇḍinī*), **collyrium girl** (*kajjalī*) — Māheśvarī (Śāṅkarī) — heart
3) Kollā [81] — fisherwoman (*kaivartī*), **butcher woman** (*saunī*) — Kaumārī — throat
4) Aṭṭahāsa — chalk miner woman (*khaṭṭikā*), **passionate woman** (*kāmukī* [82]) — Vaiṣṇavī — palate
5) Jayantikā — ball-making woman (*kaṇḍukī*), **leather worker** (*carmakāriṇī*) — Vārāhī — drop
6) Caritra — washerwoman (*rajakī*), **liquor seller** (*dhvajinī*) — Indrāṇī — sound
7) Ekāmra — sculptress (*śilpinī*), **bone crusher woman** (*asthividāriṇī*) — Cāmuṇḍā — the place of power (*śaktisthāna*)[83]
8) Devīkoṭa [84] — outcaste woman (*antyajā*), **fisherwoman** (*dhīvarī*) — Mahālakṣmī [85] — teacher's mouth [86]

[80] The quotation in the printed edition of the *Tantrāloka* lists Varuṇā as the name of this place. This is probably an editorial error for Varaṇā. Referring to this place, the KuKh declares that "Varaṇā is in Vārāṇasī" (16/17). Thus we can safely identify this place with Vāraṇasī and not Varuṇā, which is site number 46 in Map 1.

[81] This place is Kollāgiri. The edition of the *Tantrāloka* reads Kulagiri.

[82] The edition of the *Tantrāloka* reads *kārmukī*.

[83] This is the Cavity of Brahmā on the crown of the head.

[84] The KuKh calls this place Koṭivarṣa, as does KMT (25/94). This is an alternative name for Devīkoṭa (also spelt Devīkoṭṭa).

[85] There is an extra ninth entry according to the *Mādhavakula* and the *Devyāyāmala*. This is Haimapura, where the oil-grinding woman (*cakriṇī*) resides. As the 'mistress of the wheels' she is appropriately identified with Kuṇḍalinī. More specifically, she is Kālasaṁkarṣaṇī who, as the Mistress of Kula (*kuleśvarī*), is worshipped in the centre either alone, with her consort or independently of the eight listed above. Although the references quoted in the *Tantrāloka* do not tell us this specifically, the eight may also be identified with the Eight Mothers who surround Kālasaṁkarṣaṇī represented by her 17-syllabled mantra.

[86] The teacher's mouth (*guruvaktra*) is located at the End of the Twelve above the head. This is where the energy of the Transmental (*unmanī*) is located, through which the teachings flow down from the transcendent reality above.

It is a matter of great interest, known only to a few learned initiates, that this set of eight, as presented in the Kubjikā Tantras, is worshipped regularly by Newar Kaula initiates. This they do both in their secret domestic rites and outside in sites situated around the Kathmandu Valley and large urban areas. A representative example of this replication is the circle of Mothers that surround Bhaktapur (see Map 8). Although we cannot be sure how long this sacred geography has been in place, tradition ascribes its establishment to King Ānanda Malla, who probably ruled Bhaktapur in the fourteenth century.[87] The reader is referred to published studies for details.[88] Suffice it to say for our present purpose that the individual Mothers are represented by icons kept in special temples (*dyāḥcheñ*) and by stones in sites called *pīṭha* situated around the border of Bhaktapur. A New Year festival that takes place in April serves, amongst other things, to commemorate the founding of the city of Bhaktapur. The founding of the city in this case effectively means the establishment of its sacred geography, of which the circle of Mothers is one of its cardinal features. Amongst several other important events that take place during this nine-day festival is the installa-

Alternative inner maps of these eight places and the projection of the Eight Mothers onto the body drawn from the *Śrīmatottara*, an important Kubjikā Tantra, and the *Śrīkāmākhyaguhyasiddhi* have been published by Dehejia 1986: 48. The latter work is attributed to Matsyendranātha. Thus a typical colophon begins: *iti śrīmacchagnapādāvatāre śrīkāmākhyāvinirgataḥ guhyasiddhi*. In this text, these eight sites are identified with eight typical places where Tantras of all schools recommend the adept (*sādhaka*) should go to observe his vow (*vrata*) and repeat mantras as follows: 1) Prayāga — cremation ground; 2) Varaṇā — a solitary tree; 3) Kollā — a mountain peak; 4) Aṭṭahāsa — a temple of the Mothers; 5) Jayantī — a palace; 6) Caritra — a deserted house; 7) Ekāmraka — the bank of a river; 8) Devīkoṭa — a forest.

> *śmaśānaṁ tu prayāgaṁ* [*prayoge*] *ca varaṇā ekavṛkṣakam* || *5* ||
> *parvatāgro bhavet kollāṭṭahāso* [*aṭṭahasāgrha*] *mātṛkāgṛham* |
> *prāsādastu jayantī ca caritraṁ śūnyaveśma ca* || *6* ||
> *ekāmrakaṁ* [*ekāgrakaṁ*] *nadītīramaraṇyaṁ devikoṭakam* |
> *sthānaṁ ca kathitaṁ bhadre . . .* || (2/5cd-7c)

This text not only confirms that this set of eight places is a standard one, it also exemplifies how sacred sites can be rendered easily accessible not just by projecting them into the adept's body but also into his environment.

[87] See Levy 1992: 489f.

[88] See, for example, ibid.: 464-500.

tion of both the icons of the Mothers and the re-affirmation, by the same token, of their presence in the stones. Now, although the worship of groups of Eight Mothers is a common feature of most, if not all, the Tantric systems of the Kaula and Bhairava Tantras, their exact configuration in the form listed above is peculiar to the Kubjikā Tantras. The secret liturgies of many, if not all, of the Kaula traditions (*āmnāya*) in Bhaktapur take this set with these particular eight low-caste women associated with them as the standard format in which the Mothers are worshipped. This is true of the Newar Śrīvidyā liturgies even though the root Tantras of this school know nothing of these identifications. It is true also for forms of Kālī Newar initiates worship, such as Guhyakālī and Siddhalakṣmī. The former was, in any case, absorbed early on into the Kubjikā cult, as I have already noted elsewhere. If any doubt remains that the Eight Mothers of Bhaktapur are derived from the Kubjikā Tantras, the identification is confirmed by the fact that while the Mothers are being installed, one a night, on the border of the outer civic space, the principal goddesses on whom the Mothers attend are worshipped in the royal palace as the deities of the king, the state and the people. As one would expect, these goddesses include, in a prominent manner, the tutelary of the Malla kings, Siddhalakṣmī. Indeed, the secret rite performed in the royal palace on the main day of the festival which mirrors the erection a large pole (*yasiñ*) in a public place in Bhaktapur culminates with the erection of a flag pole and flag (*dvajārohaṇa*) to the goddess Siddhalakṣmī. Even so, the main goddess worshipped secretly in the course of this secret rite is Kubjikā. Accordingly, the Mothers who are her attendants in the Tantras are those who are worshipped as her attendants in the city of Bhaktapur. This is symbolized by the collocation of the goddess Tripurā in the centre of the circle, thus marking the 'true' (i.e. esoteric) centre of town. Although the public worship Tripurā there in the form of an aniconic stone as a ninth Mother, initiates know that this is the place where initiates worship their own lineage goddess, who may or may not be Tripurā.[89]

[89] Newar initiates frequently worship their own esoteric deities in place of the public ones. The public deity is venerated as the surface onto which the esoteric deity is projected and worshipped in secret. Notable examples of this phenomenon is the worship of the main Bhairava in Bhaktapur as Kubjikā, Paśupati as Śikhāsvacchanda Bhairava, and his consort Guhyakālī as the goddess embodying the weapon (*astra*) of the goddess Kubjikā.

Here then we have a fine example of the replication of Tantric sacred geography mediated by its initial interiorization in the domestic rites of Newar Kaulas. We may note here one of the important functions of interiorization, namely that, once the initiate has interiorized a sacred geography, he can transport it within himself. Then, if his cult receives the necessary patronage, which occurs when, for example, a king becomes an initiate, he can project it outside.[90] In this case *this* projection makes the foundation of the civic space a mesocosmic replication of Kaula geography. Thus it allows Newar initiates the possibility of visiting these places, as did their Indian Kaula ancestors. This example serves to demonstrate the need for the continuing existence of such places in the outer, public domain. Not only do the Mothers serve as demarcators and protectors of the sacralized civic space, it also makes the pilgrimage to their sacred sites possible. And the citizens of Bhaktapur do in fact do this on the occasion of the New Year's festival and the nine-day worship in autumn of Durgā, who is the common public identity of each Kaula goddess.

The pilgrimage to such places, whether by Newars in their towns or by their predecessors in India, is undertaken as a vow (*vratacaryā*). The pilgrimage can be interiorized as a possible alternative to its actual performance. When this happens it is called the Vow of Knowledge (*vidyāvrata*). The KMT declares that, "he who practises the Vow (*vratacaryā*) and internalizes what is external achieves success

[90] One of the many examples of this phenomenon can be seen in the temple of Saṁvara/Bde-mchog in Tsaparang. Tucci (1989: 43-5) has described this temple, which contains detailed frescos of the *maṇḍalas* of the Saṁvara cycle of the Buddhist Anuttarayoga Tantra. On one of the walls there are three *maṇḍalas* representing the body, speech and mind of the enlightened adept. They are squares, on the sides of each of which are represented eight sacred Vajrayāna sites in India. These sites correspond to those plotted on Map 9. Just as these sacred sites were transported to Tsaparang in this way, they travelled wherever Saṁvara was worshipped, including the entire Himalayan region. Thus Tucci remarks that "now all these places are [found] through Zanskar, Kashmir, Kulu, the districts of Hazara and Swat" (ibid.: 43). They were not only transposed in this way from place to place but were also internalized as the parameters of the adept's body, speech and mind. And, by means of another reversal, they marked spots of the giant body of the enlightened adept projected onto the landscape.

(*siddhi*)".[91] The practice of the vow is living in accord with one's basic state of being (*bhāva*); this is why the Tantra says that it is called the Vow of Knowledge. This basic state of being is full of awareness, through which the perceptible is discerned in the course of cognition, and so the power of consciousness is awakened.[92] The application and development of this awareness through spiritual discipline and its continued maintenance in daily life, which is manifest in adherence to the rules of right spiritual conduct, is to live in accord with one's inner being, which is the internal Vow of Knowledge. As the Tantra says:

"Meditation, worship, the repetition of mantra, the fire sacrifice and the practice of the Rule (*samayācaraṇa*) — this is said to be the Vow of Knowledge. The external vow is not the best." [93]

Again:

"These places (*sthāna*) I have mentioned are within the inner (Supreme) Self (*adhyātma*) and are grounded in the individual soul. The eternal (Self), residing in the Wheel of the Heart, wanders constantly within them. As long as (a person) does not attain the inner teaching (*adhyātmanirṇaya*) concerning the sacred seats, how can he have success (*siddhi*) even if he wanders (throughout) the triple universe?" [94]

But the Kubjikā Tantras do not prescribe the elimination of the outer sacred sites or outer pilgrimage. Though the outer pilgrimage is fruitless without the inner, it serves a necessary function for those who are not yet fully developed.[95] In order to achieve success both the internal and external vows should be practised together.[96] As the Tantra says: "Both the inner and outer aspects have an inner and outer condition." [97]

[91] KMT, 25/121.

[92] Ibid., 25/38.

[93] KuKh, 14/22cd-23ab.

[94] Ibid. 14/80cd-82ab.

[95] Accordingly, a Kubjikā Tantra succinctly states: "The external sacred seats have been revealed in order to (instill) devotion in (common) people." (KuKh 14/83ab)

[96] "One who has thus performed the internal and external vow, (practised right) conduct and (applied the spiritual) means (*sādhanā*), has success (*siddhi*). O god, (this is) the truth, without a doubt." (Ibid. 14/99cd-100ab)

[97] Ibid. 14/82cd.

One of the major aims of this vow coincides with that of the performance of penitential vows in general, including those suggested by the Dharmaśāstras, namely, the purification of the individual from sin. According to the Kubjikā Tantras, this purification leads to liberation, just as the performance of the vow in itself gives the adept magical and yogic power — *siddhi*. In order to understand the outer form of this and other such vows in a larger perspective, we should have to retrace its history right back to Vedic times and Vedic sacrifices which demanded the observance of a range of vows on the part of the patron of the sacrifice (*yajamāna*) and his officiants. For the specifically Śaiva historical precedents, we would first have to turn to the (Lakuliśa) *Pāśupatasūtras* belonging to the 3rd or 4th century. Then we would need to examine the Śaivasiddhānta Āgamas that followed after. We could then proceed on to the Bhairava Tantras, which logically and in actual fact (some parts of them at least) were the immediate historical predecessors of the Kaula Tantras. These texts contain prescriptions for numerous vows (*vrata*). The unedited *Brahmayāmala* is an example of a Bhairava Tantra that is especially rich in this respect. The important and likewise unedited Kālī-centred *Jayadrathayāmala* also lists many such vows. These include the Vow of Madness (*unmattavrata*), the Vow of Nakedness (*nagnavrata*), the Vow to Be Transvestite (*strīveśadharavrata*), the Vow to Wear Red Clothes (*raktaveśadharavrata*), and many more, including the most famous of all, the Great Vow (*mahāvrata*). This vow requires that the ascetic wander constantly from place to place imitating Bhairava's penance for having severed one of Brahmā's heads. He should wear six insignia, namely, a necklace (*kuṇṭhikā*), neck ornament (*rucaka*), earrings (*kuṇḍala*), crest-jewel (*śikhāmaṇi*), ashes (*bhasma*) and a sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*). Most important of all is the skull he should carry. The ascetics who observed this vow were accordingly called Kāpālikas ('Skull Bearers').

The *Brahmayāmala*[98] has been described as a Kāpālika Tantra. This is partly because the form of the cult it prescribes is relatively

[98] It is worth noting in passing that the *Brahmayāmala* recommends that the neophyte take initiation in a cremation ground in Vārāṇasī confirming the connection of this now, dominantly, Purāṇic city with the early Bhairava and Śākta cults. See Dyczkowski 1988: 6:

literal and undomesticated. In particular, it devotes lengthy passages to a description of the aforementioned insignias and, especially, to the skull.[99] The Kubjikā and other Kaula traditions were close descendants of such cults, and many traces of their connection remain. Thus the Kubjikā Tantras prescribe five rather than six insignias and omit the infamous skull. They also admit the wandering life. Thus a Kubjikā Tantra says:

"Adorned with (the sacred insignias),[100] the recitor of mantra, taking (each sacred) field (*kṣetra*) as a refuge, should wander (from one to the other and within them. These places include), in due order, a cremation ground, (a deserted) forest, (an abandoned) well (or) garden, an auspicious temple, an empty palace, the peak of a mountain, a crossroad of four roads, one of three roads, village roads, the seashore, the bank of the confluence of rivers or, O sinless one, (a desert where there is only) a solitary tree or (where there is just) a single liṅga or (any) fearful (*caṇḍa*) (sacred) field." [101]

Abhinavagupta, who belonged to the 11th century, systematically expounded a possible pattern of total interiorization of such sites and, indeed, all Tantric ritual. The reason why this is possible

"The sacred circle shown to the neophyte in the course of his initiation into the cult of the *Brahmayāmala* is to be drawn in a cremation ground with the ashes of a cremated human corpse. In it are worshipped Yakṣas, Piśācas and other demonic beings, including Rākṣasas led by Rāvaṇa, who surround Bhairava to whom wine is offered with oblations of beef and human flesh prepared in a funeral pyre. The name of the circle is the 'Great Cremation Ground' (*mahāśmaśāna*) and is to be drawn in Vārāṇasī." (See also *ibid.*: 30).

[99] Although I would agree with this characterization of this and similar Tantras as a graphic, generic manner of describing their contents, it is important to note that references in them to any specific Kāpālika sect are rare, if they exist. The *Brahmayāmala* certainly does not contain any. It would therefore be hazardous to say that this was the Tantra of a Kāpālika sect even though it does contain a great deal of interesting material concerning the performance of the Kāpālika's vow.

[100] The KMT (25/43) explains that the five insignias are the Five Instruments (*karaṇa*). These are the five deities who generate, sustain and withdraw the five gross elements, namely, Brahmā (Earth), Viṣṇu (Water), Śiva (Fire), Rudra (Air), and Maheśvara (Etheric Space).

[101] KuKh 14/29cd-32ab.

and should be realized is in every case the same, namely, everything is a manifestation of consciousness within consciousness, like a reflection in a mirror. Thus as long as this has not been realized rituals and pilgrimages may be performed, "but", as Abhinava says, "for one who sees that all this rests primarily in the body, the inner vital breath and in consciousness, what use are these other outer deluding peregrinations (*bhramaṇaḍambara*)?"[102]

Worship at sacred sites does not lead to liberation, even if they have been internalized. Even if they are projected onto the body or, deeper, into the vital breath, they remain external to consciousness. Nonetheless, Abhinava does not deny that pilgrimage may be beneficial, in the sense that it does yield some fruit, namely, the specific benefits and accomplishments (*siddhi*), magical and yogic, that each of these places and its resident deities is supposed to bestow.[103] These, however, are worldly benefits (*bhoga*) rather than the liberated condition.[104] Even so Abhinava does not reject external ritual. Pilgrimage to sacred sites, like all ritual and yogic practice, are part of a hierarchy of possibilities depending on the spiritual development of the aspirant.[105]

[102] TĀ 15/100b-1a.

[103] Abhinava writes: "Thus all these places, internal and external, concern (only) those who wish to obtain the fruits of this or that Wheel (*cakra*). According to the (Śaiva) scripture these places (*sthāna*) are diverse and without number." (TĀ 15/101b-2a)

[104] Abhinava writes: "Mountain tops, riverbanks, solitary liṅgas and the like mentioned (in the Tantras) are external (places). Here (in this doctrine) they serve (as a means to attain) particular accomplishments, not for liberation. Mountain peaks and the like, projected into the vital breath within the body serve as a means for (Tantric) practitioners (*sādhaka*) to gain accomplishments (*siddhi*), not for liberation." (TĀ 15/80b-2a)

[105] Abhinava quotes the *Matangatantra* as saying that "This prescription to ritual action (*vidhāna*) is an easy means (*sukhopāya*) which the teacher explains to those who are unable to contemplate (the true liberating) knowledge" (TĀ 15/8). Therefore, initiation (*dīkṣā*), Tantric spiritual discipline (*caryā*) and concentration (*samādhi*) are for those who are unable to attain reality directly by knowledge. Even so, initiation and the rest are based on knowledge and so, according to Abhinava, the man of knowledge (*jñānin*), rather than the one who performs rituals, or even the yogi, is the most excellent. Similarly, he says that teachers are of increasing orders of excellence according to whether they are proficient in the performance of rituals, Yoga or knowledge (TĀ 15/18-9).

Moreover, going to places where spiritual people gather is conducive to the practice of Yoga and therefore to the acquisition of spiritual knowledge.[106] Even so, he denies that places have any inherent power in themselves. One may worship successfully wherever the lotus of the heart of consciousness unfolds.[107]

While the Kubjikā Tantras agree that for this, or any, spiritual discipline to be effective, its interior equivalent must be experienced, they do not deny the existence of the power of place (*sthānaśakti*). According to this theory, the rays of the deity's consciousness converge in certain places by virtue of these places' inherent power. This convergence and formation in this way of a location where the deity may descend into the world is essential because no worship is possible in the absence of location. Each deity, whether in the outside world or within the body, must have a place of its own. This place, which serves as the sacred seat and field of the deity, is where union (*melāpa*) with the deity takes place. Consuming a sacrificial meal of meat and wine, the adept receives the grace of the deity of that place which is thus no less sacred than the deity itself.

In a more archaic, magical perspective, such places were originally believed to be potent in themselves, and this potency could be channelled and applied. Indeed, the Tantras prescribe the practice of magical rites aimed at the control of others and the destruction of one's enemies in these same places. Abhinava's warning against attachment to the practice of magic [108] recalls to mind the large amount of space dedicated to such matters in the Tantras in general and most particularly in ones such as these. The passages are eloquent testimony of the primitive animistic and magical substratum of the religious culture out of which they developed as more elevated refinements — literally 'sanskritizations'. One of these refinements is the

[106] Ibid. 15/98b-100a.

[107] Abhinava writes: "The wealth of the sacrifice (*yāgaśrī*) is well established in that place (*dhāman*), whether internal or external, where the lotus of the heart blooms (*vikāsa*). Liberation is not (attained) in any other way except by severing the knot of ignorance and that, according to the venerable Vīrāvalī Tantra, is (brought about) by the expansion (*vikāsa*) of consciousness." (Ibid. 15/107b-9a)

[108] *aindrajālikavṛttānte na rajyeta kadācana* | Ibid. 14/26a.

incorporation of the ideal of liberation as a part of this geography of magical power places where the adept acquires powers, including the Great Accomplishment (*mahāsiddhi*), namely, liberation. The culmination of this process of refinement was not the addition of a totally different, higher ideal, but rather its interiorization. These Tantras did not teach, as did Abhinava, that liberation and the attainment of accomplishment (*siddhi*) are contrasting ideals belonging to different realms. On the contrary, the Kubjikā Tantras say that:

"If one perceives the pure inner aspect with the mind, O beloved, then the subtle rays (of the light of the Supreme Principle) within each external thing bestow union (*melaka*), the sacrificial pap (*caru*) or the liberated state (*apāśavīvidhi*). They endow the lineage (with the teachings) and explain the self-established (reality — *svastha*). O god, he who wanders on the earth with an impure inner being does not, for that reason, have a vision (of the deity — *darśana*) anywhere through me, O Rudra. Although he sees, he sees not; although (reality is) perceivable, it is not perceived. He cannot know (the rays of consciousness which are) the goddesses of various kinds."[109]

". . . (The rays arise) in town, village, forest, city or crossroad, peasant's hut, Tantric meeting ground (*saṁdoha*), sacred seat (*pīṭha*), field, grove, garden, small grove or in (any of the other) aforementioned (places). (Indeed), the rays of consciousness (*jñāna*) arise in every single place. O fair-hipped one, they are innumerable within earth or in water, fire, wind, and air."[110]

Thus the aspirant is admonished to be a pilgrim. But along with his outer pilgrimage he must learn to travel through his own body along the conduits of the vital force to their vital centres. This is his inner journey through the world orders arranged as stations along his ascent to freedom. He must travel through the universe — the Egg of Brahmā. Then when he reaches the top he will find Daṇḍapāṇi who with his staff cracks open the Egg for him to ascend up beyond it.[111]

[109] KuKh 14/83cd-87ab.

[110] Ibid. 14/89f.

[111] Paraphrasing the *Svacchandatantra* Abhinava writes: "Above Rudra's abode is (the abode of) of Daṇḍapāṇi who, in accord with Śiva's will, breaks the egg and fashions the path to liberation." (TĀ 8/159b-60, see also SvT 10/611b-4)

The accomplished adept is one who is free to move at will (*svecchā-carin*) throughout the cosmic order [112] and move beyond it. Thus, the Tantras envisage an end to the initiate's cosmic wayfaring. The universe is not a closed system, reality extends beyond it, for otherwise there could be no freedom from the cosmic order. There is no break between the realms of worldly experience (*bhoga*) and those of the liberated state. Even beyond the cosmic order, at the very summit of reality (*parā kāṣṭhā*), movement does not cease. But the perfected initiate (*siddha*) no longer needs to suffer the strains of a long and tiring journey. No longer held fast by the forces of attraction to the glorious diversity (*vicitratā*) of the cosmic order, he is free to take flight. No longer wandering in the complex net of Māyā with its countless locations and times, he moves through the Sky of Pure Consciousness. This then is the ideal of the Bhairava Tantras and, especially, the Kaula Tantra, namely, the Accomplishment of Flight (*khecaratvasiddhi*).[113]

[112] Cf. ŚM fol. 137b: "He wanders as he pleases right up to the end of the world of Brahmā." (*bhramate ca yathecchayā ābrahmabhuvanāntikam*).

[113] According to the Kubjikā Tantras, the fruits of travelling to the sites of the Eight Mothers with the prescribed inner mindfulness are indeed, as Abhinava says of all such pilgrimages, the acquisition of various magical and yogic powers (*siddhi*). These are attained over years of practice in a graded order until the final one is attained, which is the Accomplishment of Flight. Even though it comes at the end of a graded series of worldly attainments, this culminating accomplishment is not worldly (*bhoga*), but liberation itself. Ideally, the KMT tells us that in this particular case, this takes place in twelve years when "even one who has murdered a brahmin" achieves success. In the first year he gains political power. The king and his harem come under his control and the king's vassal lords and ministers venerate him. In two years he gains power over the fair damsels of the spirits of vegetation (*yakṣakanyā*). In three years, the women of the demons of the seven hells are so aroused by the adept that they literally die in their yearning for him. In the following years he attains the higher worlds, starting with that of Brahmā up to that of Rudra. In the eighth year he reaches that of Īśvara, in the ninth that of Sadāśiva and in the tenth he becomes a veritable repository of knowledge. By the eleventh year, he can sport in the sky with the mighty beings who reside there, and in the twelfth, endowed with all eight yogic powers, he moves with the Skyfarers in the Sky of Pure Consciousness beyond the sky (KMT 25/53-64ab).

The Siddhas and Yoginīs who reside in the sacred places in the Triangle are all Skyfarers. They move in the Void of the Yoni, nourishing themselves with the nectar of immortality that exudes from it. They are one with the energy that "wanders in the Sky" (*khecarī*). As the energy of Speech she vitalizes all the phonemic energies that combine in infinite variety. As each of them is a sacred place, she is not only the Nameless (*anāmā*) Letter but also Place (*sthāna*); what the text calls the divine inner Place that is one's own place (*svasthāna*).[114]

Abhinavagupta, in accord with his hermeneutic, provides a more sophisticated phenomenological interpretation. The energy that "wanders in the Void" is the reflective awareness of the light of consciousness that shines as all things. This energy wanders amidst the objects of the senses and they thus become objects of perception. By extension, this same power is responsible for the subjective responses to the object, namely, attraction or repulsion. Thus, this energy consists of both the inner and outer senses as well as their objects.[115] The Skyfarer is one with this energy. Thus, whatever she or he sees becomes a divine manifestation of consciousness. We are reminded here of one of the modalities through which the goddess generates sacred place, that is, by her powerful and gracious gaze.[116]

[114] Khecarī is the Letter Without Name (*anāmā*). The series of letters from A to KṢA are the sleeping form of bliss radiant like the Wish-granting Gem, the whole extent of which is Kula Bhairava. It is the Place (*sthāna*), the divine inner Place which is one's own place (*svasthāna*) that has emerged from OṂ. It is bliss whose body is invisible (*adṛṣṭa*). The pure transcendent tradition (*anvaya*). This is the teaching concerning the Sequence of the Divine Current. (CMSS 1/37ab)

[115] PTv, p. 39.

[116] Abhinava arrives at the same creative idealism through an analysis of the more purely Śaiva (rather than Kaula Śākta) spirituality when he says:

"Śiva, the agent of the five functions of emanation, persistence, reabsorption, obscuration and grace, is (our own pure) consciousness. The yogi who is firmly identified with (Śiva) in his fullness and freedom is the author of (these) five functions. For him worship, the repetition of Mantra, contemplation and Yoga are a perennial, undecaying reality." (TĀ, 14/24-5)

In this ideal we can perceive a continuity with the ascetic traditions of India that stretch right back to Vedic times. Even the *Ṛgveda* describes the earliest known ascetics, the munis, who imitated Rudra, the Vedic prototype of Śiva/Bhairava, as Skyfarers:

"The Munis, girdled with the wind, wear garments soiled of yellow hue; they, following the wind's swift course, go where the gods have gone before. . . . Wind (*vāyu*) hath churned for him: for him he poundeth things most hard to bend, when he with long loose locks hath drunk, with Rudra, poison [117] from the cup." [118]

Conclusion

To conclude and complete the circuit, as it were, let us return back to earth with its physical, cultural and historical geography. At this point a question naturally comes to mind, namely, to what extent are the geographies of these texts realistic? Are these real places or mere names that serve as another set of ciphers the Tantras employ to feed their seemingly limitless appetite for symbolic representation?

A detailed geographical and historical study of each of the places plotted on the maps and listed in the chart appended to this chapter is in the course of preparation. This will certainly yield a good deal of information. But we should not be disappointed if we do not find all that we expect. These forms of Tantrism are not well suited to be public religions. Even when internalized, they remain esoteric, private cults that require neither temples nor public, communal festivals. Even so traces do remain in, for example, forms of temple architecture, iconography, literary references, occasional inscriptions, and in the sacred geographies of the Purāṇas that are still in place.

The sacred geography of some traditions, at least, of the Buddhist Yoga and Anuttara class of Tantras of the same period coincided in many respects with that of the Bhairava and Kaula Tantras (see Map 9). It is not surprising therefore that the Tantras and commentaries on both Buddhist and Śaiva-cum-Śākta sides of the fence contain admonitions to stay clear of one another if encounters happen to take place in such sites. Vajrayāna Buddhists who have been

[117] Griffith: water.

[118] Ṛg 10/136/2,7, translation by Griffith.

initiated into the Yoga and Anuttarayoga Tantras, which have been the most influenced by Śaivism, call themselves Kaulas. The Hindu Kaula Tantras [119] call them 'Bauddhakaulas'. The Buddhists, however, considered themselves to be superior to their Śaiva counterparts because they maintained that, unlike the Śaivites, they found internal symbolic equivalents for the elements of Kaula ritual, including the sacred geography. The distance both parties feel should be maintained between each other is a measure of their similarity. Indeed, there are numerous details such as these that confirm their common cultural heritage that, at its grass roots, one could call the culture of the vagrant ascetic and the sacred seats.[120] These were power places that were felt to have power in themselves, and so it would not be surprising if many of them existed before these Tantric developments.

By the 10th century when, I believe, the earliest Kubjikā Tantra was redacted, the sacred geography of these places had assumed the form of the regular and recurrent pattern of an ideal scheme. But even so, it was still functional. It was, moreover, purely Tantric, that is to say, sanctioned by and recorded in the Tantras. For the followers of the Bhairava and Kaula Tantras, this appears to be a period of transition from the vagrant life of the solitary ascetic to that of the householder. Thus, the group of fifty sacred sites that, as far as we know at present, appears for the first time in the Kubjikā Tantras were simply treated as a standard ideal set. The list appears, as we have noted, in the *Yoginīhṛdaya*, where it is already formalized. And it continued to be a popular list long past the days when it could have reflected an objective situation. Thus it recurs in the *Jñānārṇavatantra*

[119] The KMT 10/146a expressly says: *varjayet kaulikān bauddhān*, "one should avoid Buddhist Kaulas."

[120] The KMT declares: "One should know that that is Kula which graces everybody. Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, the last born and those without caste (*prākṛta*), including sweepers and foreigners (*mlecchajāti*), Buddhists, followers of the Sāṁkhya and Jains, ascetics with three sticks (*tridaṇḍa*), those who shave their heads, (carry) ascetics' staffs (*khaṭvāṅga*) and clubs (*muṣala*) or perform other rituals (*anyakriyā*) — all these reach the Supreme Śaiva reality. The Śaivite (has reached the goal and so) does not go anywhere." (Ibid. 10/139-40)

and several other Tantric texts[121] throughout the medieval period right up to the 17th-century *Tantrasāra* by the Bengali Kṛṣṇānanda. By his time the original grid of fifty letters was long forgotten. He must have thought the correct number the lucky 51. Thus, he divides one entry — Merugiri — into two, Meru and Giri.

Parallel to these developments in the Tantras are those in the Purāṇas. These sacred texts sanctioned public forms of religion, including the Śāktism that developed from the middle of the first millennium. An early list of 108 sacred sites is found in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.[122] This list was reproduced in several Purāṇas, including the *Devībhāgavata*, where the sites are called '*pīṭhas*', a specifically Tantric term (the Purāṇic term is '*tīrtha*'). One hundred and fifty sites mentioned in Tantras have been plotted on the first ten maps appended to this essay. Twenty-eight of them are amongst the 108 (see Map 11). This is because the sacred geography of Śākta sites in the Purāṇas extended its range to include many clearly Purāṇic sites. The cluster around Badrinātha on Map 11 is an example. Citrakūṭa, Gāyā and Vṛndāvana are other notable examples. The myth of origin of these places which relates them to the dismembered parts of Satī's body is not found in the early Tantras. This is all the more surprising because they know the story of Dakṣa's sacrifice and how his daughter, Satī/Umā, threw herself into the sacrificial fire and died because Śiva, her husband, was not invited to it. The subse-

[121] The passage is found in the 15th chapter of the *Jñānārṇavatantra*, which postdates the *Yoginīhṛdaya*. It recurs in the *Śāktānandataraṅginī* (chapter 15) by the 17th-century Bengali Brahmānanda, who quotes it from the *Gāndharvatantra*. See also chapter 5 of the *Bṛhannīlatantra*.

[122] *Matsya Purāṇa* 13/26-56. Sircar (1973: 25) informs us that: "An early list of this nature can be traced in the *Mahābhārata* (VI, ch. 23); but a complete list of the 108 names of the mother goddess with the specification of her association with particular holy places is probably to be found for the first time in the *Matsya Purāṇa*." Sircar places the text in the "early medieval period", but it may well be quite late. It is certainly not prior to the 12th century. This is because the Purāṇa refers to Vṛndāvana as a resort of Rādhā and to Puruṣottama in Puri. The former was certainly unknown as a divinity before the post-Gupta period. The latter did not attain to eminence prior to Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga (1078-1147 A.D.), who laid the foundation of the great temple of Jagannātha at Purī.

quent evolution of the sacred geography of the Śākta *pīṭhas* thus mirrors the evolution of Śāktism in the Purāṇas as much, indeed more, than in the Tantras.

An example of the degree to which this process has progressed is how few have observed that the goddess Mahiṣāsuramardinī/ Durgā is actually a purely Purāṇic goddess. Prior to the 13th century or even later, the goddess Durgā, although known to the Tantras, plays no significant role in the Tantras' ritual programmes. She is the public non-Tantric representative of the secret Tantric goddesses. The Śāktism of the Purāṇas, on the other hand, gives this goddess pride of place, assimilating other goddesses, including those of the Tantras, to her. The same process can be observed geographically in the layout of the 108 Śākta pīṭhas.

Thus Tantric cults and their sacred geography survive both within the adept and his home as well as in the outer world to the degree in which they can be assimilated or adapted to the public domain without losing their essentially secret, internal identity.

Appendices and Figures

Appendix 1: A list of the sites plotted on the maps.
Appendix 2: A table of locations associated with the Six Kaula Siddhas.
Appendix 3: Maps.* These include:

1) The Fifty Sites according to the Kumārikākhanda of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* and *Ṭīkā* by Rūpaśiva fol. 3a.
2) The Fifty Sites according to the *Ambāmatasaṁhitā* fol. 13a.
3) The Fifty Sites according to the *Yoginīhṛdaya* 3/36-43.
4) The Twenty-Four Sites according to the *Jayadrathayāmala* quoted in TĀ 29/59-63.
5) The Thirty-Four Sites according to the *Niśisaṁcāratantra* quoted in TĀ 15/84-93ab.
6) The Twenty-Four Sites according to the *Kubjikāmatatantra* 22/23-46.
7) The Eight Mothers: KuKh 16/13-5 and KMT 25/90-5ab.
8) The Eight Mothers surrounding Bhaktapur. Map by Niels Gutschow in Levy 1992: 155. The numbers designate the deities in the sequence in which they are worshipped. They are 1) Brāhmaṇī 2) Maheśvarī 3) Kumārī 4) Vaiṣṇavī 5) Vārāhī 6) Indrāṇī 7) Mahākālī 8) Mahālakṣmī 9) Tripurasundarī. The dense bands of dots represents the edge of the present city.
9) The Buddhist Sites. The map has been plotted on the basis of the lists of sacred sites found in selected Buddhist Tantras in an article in Hindī called "*Bauddha tantroṁ meṁ pīṭhopapīṭhādi kā vivecana*" published in *Dhīḥ*, Sarnath, Varanasi, 1986 vol. I: 137-148. The Tantras and texts consulted were the *Vasantatilaka*, *Jñānodaya*, *Vajravārāhīyogarājottamarahasya*, *Śrīcakrasaṁvaraherukābhisamaya*, *Laghutantraṭīkā*, *Abhisamayamañjarī*, *Yoginījāla*, *Saṁvarodaya* and *Hevajratantra*. Details of the sources, all of which are manuscripts, apart from the *Saṁvarodaya* and *Hevajratantra*, can be found in the aforementioned article. The places listed in all these Tantras apart from the *Hevajratantra* (1/7/12-18) are virtually identical. Thus, effectively, there are only two lists. One is labelled HT in the table and the other BT.
10) The Six Kaula Siddhas: See Appendix 2.
11) 108 Śākta Sites according to the *Matsyapurāṇa*: Sircar 1973: 26-28.

* I am very grateful to Prof. Rana P.B. Singh for plotting the location of the sites which were transferred to the computerized version.

Figure 1: The Triangular *Meruprastāra.*

Figure 2: The projection onto the body of the fifty Bhairavas and sacred sites:

2a: The sites of the *Manthānabhairavatantra.* See Map 1.

2b: The sites of the *Ambāmatasaṁhitā.* See Map 2.

Figure 3: The projection onto the body of the twenty-four sacred sites (*kṣetras*) according to the *Jayadrathayāmala* quoted in TĀ 29/59-63. See Map 4.

Figure 4: The projection of Kubjikā's tour (*yātrā*) onto the head according to the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā*

Figure 5: The Triangle of *Santānabhuvana*, the House of the Moon (*candragṛha*).

Appendix 1: A list of the sites plotted on the maps.

Sacred Site	KuKh /ṭīkā	Ambā	YHṛ	JY	NS	KMT	HT	BT
Aṭṭahāsa	25	22	26	1	12	1	X	X
Arcapīṭha	X	10	X	X	X	X	X	X
Arbuda	8	X	8	X	X	X	13	4
Āmrātakeśvara	9	X	9	22	X	23 [123]	X	X
Ihā	X	15	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ujjayinī	33	X	34	5	5	5	X	X
Uḍḍiyāna [124]	49	9	49	X	2	X	5	X
Uḍḍīśa	X	X	41	X	X	X	X	X
Udadhestaṭa	X	X	X	X	X	X	30	X
Udyāna	X	X	X	X	X	X	31	X
Urasā	41	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ekāmra [125]	10	25	10	X	9	X	X	X
Ekāra	18 [126]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eruṇḍī [127]	44	X	X	10	19	10	X	X
Elāpura [128]	30	X	30	16	21	12	X	X
Oṁkārapīṭha	X	X	18	X	X	X	X	X
Oṁkāra	X	X	31	X	X	X	X	X
Oḍra	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Odukasa	37 [129]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Karmārapāṭaka	X	X	X	X	X	X	11	X
Kaliṅga	X	X	X	X	15	X	20	13
Kaśmīrā	X	X	X	X	28	X	X	X
Kāñcī	X	26	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kānyakubja	6	32 [130]	6	X	X	X	X	X
Kāmakoṭṭaka [131]	12	X	12	X	X	X	X	X
Kāmarūpa	1	7	1	X	1	X	4	9
Kāruṇyapāṭaka	X	X	X	X	X	X	9	X
Kuḍyākeśī	X	X	X	18	X	X	X	X
Kurukṣetra	X	38	X	X	34	X	X	X
Kulūtā [132]	21	3	22	X	16	X	12	24
Kuhundī	X	X	X	X	X	19	X	X
Kedāra	15	X	15	X	X	X	X	X
Kailāśa	13	39	13	X	X	X	X	X
Koṅkaṇa	X	12	X	X	X	X	22	X

Sacred Site / ṭīkā	KuKh	Ambā	YHṛ	JY	NS	KMT	HT	BT
Kollāgiri [133]	30	27	X	3	6	3	X	X
Kaumārīpura	X	X	X	X	X	X	28 [134]	X
Kauśala	X	X	X	X	X	X	26	12
Kṣīraka [135]	35	X	X	21	22	21	X	X
Kheṭaka	X	X	X	X	34	X	X	X
Gajendra	X	8	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gargikā	X	X	X	X	29	X	X	X
Gṛhadevatā	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	18
Gokarṇa [136]	23	31	24	12	X	13	X	X
Godāvarī	X	X	X	X	X	X	14	5
Grāmāntastha	X	X	X	X	X	X	23	X
Candrapura [137]	16	14	16	X	X	X	X	X
Caritra	34	30	34 [138]	2	X	2	25	X
Chāyāchatra	50	X	50	X	X	X	X	X
Jayantikā [139]	32	29	3	4	13	4	X	X
Jālandhara	19	13 [140]	19	X	27	X	1	2
Jāleśa	X	X	41	X	X	X	X	X
Ḍuṇapura	X	2	X	X	X	X	X	X
Triśakuni [141]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Trisrota [142]	11	18	11	X	X	X	X	X
Devīkoṭa [143]	23	34	22	X	4	8	10	7
Drukka	X	42	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dvāravṛtti	X	X	X	X	33	X	X	X
Nagara [144]	X	X	X	14	X	X [145]	7, 24	21
Nepāla	3	37 [146]	3	X	27	X	X	X
Pāripātra	X	43	X	X	X	X	X	X
Puṇḍravardhana	4 [147]	5	4	15	7	16	X	X
Pullīramalaya	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1 [148]
Purastīra [149]	5	X	5	17	X	17	X	X

Sacred Site / ṭīkā	KuKh	Ambā	YHṛ	JY	NS	KMT	HT	BT
Pūrṇagiri [150]	7	4	7	X	3	X	3	1
Pūryagiri	X	17	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pṛṣṭhāpura	39 [151]	X	39	X	X	18	X	X
Prayāga	38	11	38	6	10	6	X	X
Pretapurī [152]	X	X	X	X	X	X	29	X
Bimba	X	16	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brahmavāhā	X	48	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bhṛgunagara	14	X	14	X	X	X	X	X
Bheruṇḍaka	44	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bhopāla	31 [153]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Magadhāpura	X	45	X	X	X	X	X	X
Marukeśvara [154]	24	X	44	13	X	X	X	X
Marudeśa	X	X	X	X	25	14	X	23 [155]
Malaya [156]	42	24	42	X	X	X	X	1
Mahāpatha	28	X	29	X	X	X	X	X
Mahālakṣmī	48	1	48	X	X	X	X	X
Mahendra [157]	45	23	45	X	X	X	X	X
Māyāpurī [158]	40	33	40	20	25	22	X	X
Māruteśvara	X	X	25	X	X	X	X	X
Mālava	20 [159]	X	21	X	X	X	5	8
Munmuni	X	X	X	X	X	X	8	X
Mlecchadik	X	X	X	X	31	X	X	X
Rājagṛha [160]	27	X	28	23	23	24	X	X
Rāmeśvara	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
Rudrālaya	X	46	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lampāka	X	X	X	X	X	X	17	14
Lāhulā	X	X	X	X	17	X	X	X
Vāpikātīra	X	X	X	X	X	X	32	X
Vāmana	X	X	46	X	X	X	X	X
Vārāṇasī	2	6	2	7	14	7	X	X
Varuṇā [161]	46	19	X	X	11	X	X	X
Vindhyā	X	47	X	X	X	X	27	X

Sacred Site / ṭīkā	KuKh	Ambā	YHṛ	JY	NŚ	KMT	HT	BT
Viraja [162]	26	X	26	9	18	9	X	X
ŚrīgiriX	20	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Śrīparvata	X	28	X	X	X	X	X	X
Śrīpīṭha/parvata	17	28 [163]	17	8	X	X	X	X
Śrīśaila [164]	43	21	43	24	X	X	X	X
Ṣāṣṭha	X	X	39	X	X	X	X	X
Samānaka	X	40	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sarasvatī	X	49	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sindhu	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	22
Suvarṇadvīpa	X	X	X	X	X	X	21	20
Sopāra [165]	31	X	X	19 [166]	X	20	X	X
Saurāṣṭra	X	X	X	X	X	X	19	19
Strīrājya	X	44 [167]	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hara	X	X	X	X	30	X	X	X
Harikela	X	X	X	X	X	X	16	X
Hastināpura	36 [168]	X	36	X	X	11	X	X
Hālā [169]	X	X	X	11	20	X	X	X
Himādri	X	X	X	X	X	X	15	X
Himālaya	X	36	X	X	X	X	X	16
Hiraṇyapura [170]	47	X	47	X	X	X	X	X

[123] Āmrātikeśvara. The spellings of place names are susceptible to variation. It has therefore been necessary to establish a uniform spelling for all the maps. Variant spellings are listed in the footnotes.

[124] KuKh and *Ṭīkā*: Udyāṇa. *Ambā*: Oḍiyāṇaka. YHṛ: Uḍyāṇa. The spelling of this place name is liable to considerably more variations than others. I have chosen this spelling as it is generally, the most common. Note, however that the spelling Oḍḍiyāna is also common.

[125] KuKh 6/212: Tāmra. *Ambā*: Kāmra

[126] KuKh 6/212: Ekoṇa.

[127] Found only in the *Ṭīkā*. JY: Eḍābhī. NS: Eruḍikā. YHṛ: Airuḍī.

[128] YHṛ: Melāpura. NS: Elāpurī.

[129] *Ṭīkā*: Auḍikā.

[130] Kubjaka.

[131] KuKh and YHṛ: Kāmakoṭṭaka.

[132] KuKh 6/212: Kulūtī. YHṛ: Kulānta — variant: Kulūna. HT: Kulatā. BT: Kulatā.

[133] KuKh and *Ṭīkā*: Kaullagiri. *Ambā*: Kullagiri. JY: Kollagiri. NS: Kulagiri. KMT: Kolāgiri.

[134] Kaumārapaurikā.

[135] KuKh, *Ṭīkā* and KMT: Kṣīrikā.

[136] *Ambā*: Karṇa. KMT: Kāśmarī

[137] KKh and *Ṭīkā*: Candrapuryaka. *Ambā*: Candrapūrya. YHṛ: Pūrṇacandraka — variant reading: Candrapuṣkara.

[138] Citrā.

[139] KuKh and *Ṭīkā*, *Ambā* and KMT: Jayantī.

[140] Jālapīṭha.

[141] Variant names: Triśakuna and Triśakulī.

[142] KuKh and *Ṭīkā*: Trisrotā. *Ambā*: Tisraka. YHṛ: Triśrota.

[143] KuKh and *Ṭīkā*: Devīkoṭā. *Ambā*: Devikoṭṭa. KMT: Śrīkoṭa.

[144] I suppose that this Nagara is the modern Nagpur, not Bhṛgunagara.

[145] Caitrakaccha.

[146] Paśupati.

[147] KuKh 6/212: Pūrṇavardhana. *Ambā*: Vaṁdhana. YHṛ: Pauṇḍravardhana.

[148] *Abhisamaya*: Pullīra. This entry is missing in the *Vasantatilaka* and *Laghutantraṭīkā*.

[149] YHṛ: Purasthira. This is a variant reading the editor of the printed edition rejected. The accepted reading in that edition is Carasthira. KMT: Parastīra.

[150] *Ambā*: Pūrṇa. YHṛ: Pūrṇaśaila. In the *Saṁvarodaya* and *Laghutantraṭīkā*, this entry takes the place of Pullīramalaya found in the other texts of this group.

[151] Not found in the list in the KuKh. *Ṭikā*: Pṛṣṭāpura. YHṛ: Ṣāṣṭha.

[152] HT: Pretasaṁghāta. *Saṁvarodaya, Yoginījāla, Vasantatilaka*, and *Vajravārāhī*: Pretādhivāsinī.

[153] Not found in the *Ṭikā*. The equivalent entry there is Supāraka.

[154] KuKh and *Ṭīkā*: Meruvara. YHṛ: Meru. JY: Marukośa.

[155] *Saṁvarodaya*: Roru. *Yoginījāla, Vasantatilaka*, and *Abhisamaya*: Meru. *Laghutantraṭīkā*: Mero.

[156] *Ambā*: Mala. This entry is found only in the *Vasantatilaka.*

[157] KuKh, *Ṭīkā* and *Ambā*: Māhendra.

[158] KuKh, *Ṭīkā* and *Ambā*: Haridvāra. YHṛ and JY: Māyāpura

[159] KuKh 6/212: Mālaya.

[160] YHṛ: Rājageha. NS: Rājapurī.

[161] KuKh, *Ṭīkā*: Vāruṇa. *Ambā*: Varuṇa. NS: Varaṇā. Varaṇā is sometimes a synonym of Vārāṇasī. But as Vārāṇasī is a separate entry in the NS, I take Varaṇā there to be Varuṇā. Note also that according to the reading found in the TĀ, the seat of the second Mother in the JY is Varuṇā. According to the KMT, and other sources, it is Varaṇā, that is, Vārāṇasī. I assume, therefore, that the correct reading in the TĀ should be 'varaṇā'.

[162] KuKh 6/212: Virāja. NŚ: Virajā. KMT: Virajā.

[163] Ambā: Śrīparvata

[164] Not in found in KuKh. YHṛ: Śaila.

[165] Listed in the *Ṭīkā* only as Supāraka. The equivalent entry in the KuKh is Bhūpāla. JY: Sopāna.

[166] JY: Sopāna.

[167] Śrīrājya.

[168] Hastikāpura.

[169] Jayaratha identifies Hālā as Alipura.

[170] Haimapura, which is the location of the ninth Mother according to the JY (see map 7), is Hiraṇyapura.

Appendix 2:

The Six Kaula Siddhas according to the *Ciñciṇīmatasārasamuccaya* and the *Kulakrīḍāvatāra* (TĀ 29/38-9)

Prince	*Master*	*Ovalli* [171]	*Pīṭha*	*Town*	*Direction in relation to Śriśaila*	*Grove*	*Ghara* [172]	*Palli* [173]
Amara	Siddhanātha	Bodhi	Tripurottara	Ḍohāla	South	Kambilī	Paṭṭilla	Dakṣiṇāvarta
Varadeva	Vidyānanda	Prabhu	Kamada[174]	Kuṇḍī	West	?	Karabilla	Kumbhārikā
Citranātha	Kaulasiṁhamuni	Pāda	Aṭṭahāsa	Daṇḍaratna	North	Bilvākṣa	Ambilla	Billa
Olinātha [175]	Sṃgālamuni	Ānanda	Devīkoṭṭa	Bālahoma	East	Pāyavṛkṣa	Pulinda	Aḍavī
Vṛddhanāth [176]	Śāṇḍilyamuni	Yoga	Dakṣiṇādi[177]	Piṇḍa	South-West	Khairavṛkṣa	Śarabilla	Akṣara
Guḍikanātha	Candrabimba	Oṁ	Kaulagiri	Gauḍikā	North-West	Nārikelaphala	Aḍabilla	Ḍombī

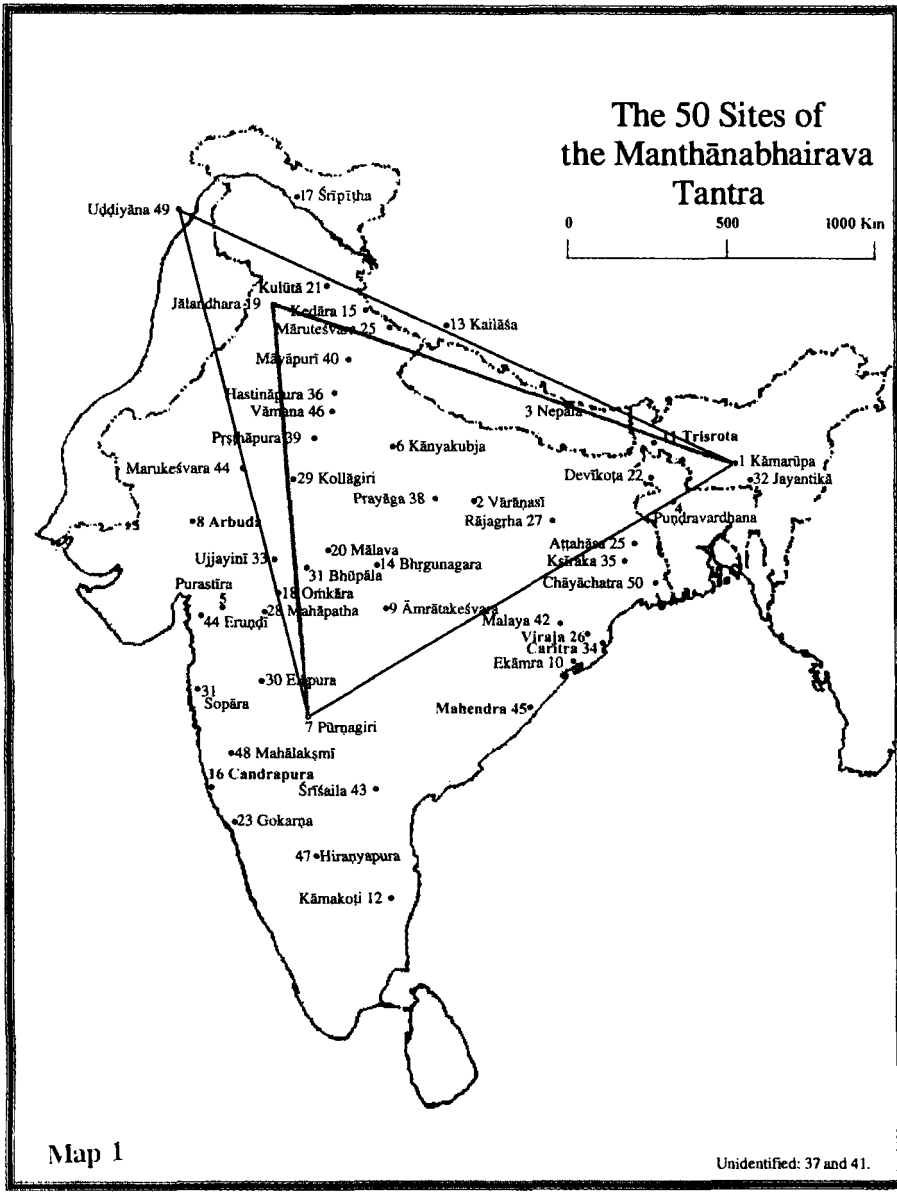
[171] Like the word *oli*, with the same meaning and to which it may be related, *ovalli* is not a word of Sanskrit derivation. It means 'tradition' or 'lineage'.

[172] A *ghara* is literally a 'house' or 'home' and, as in this case, a 'monastic centre'.

[173] A *palli* is a small village in general. Specifically, it is small tribal settlement.

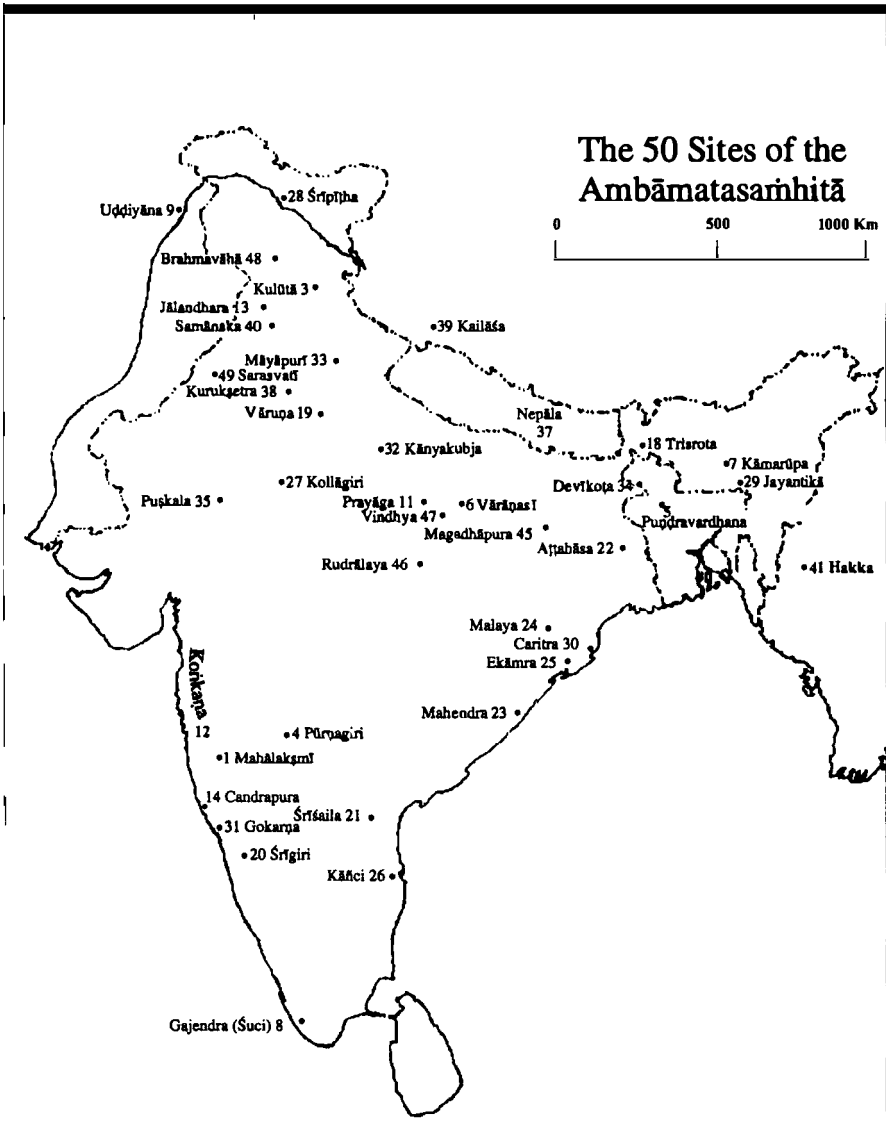
[174] KK: Kāmarūpa. [175] KK: Alinātha. According to the CMSS Olinātha travelled to Kāmaru, to the south of which was a place called Trikhaṇḍinī. There he performed austerities according to the instructions of Candrabimbamuni.

[176] KK: Vindhyanātha. [177] KK: Dakṣiṇapītha.



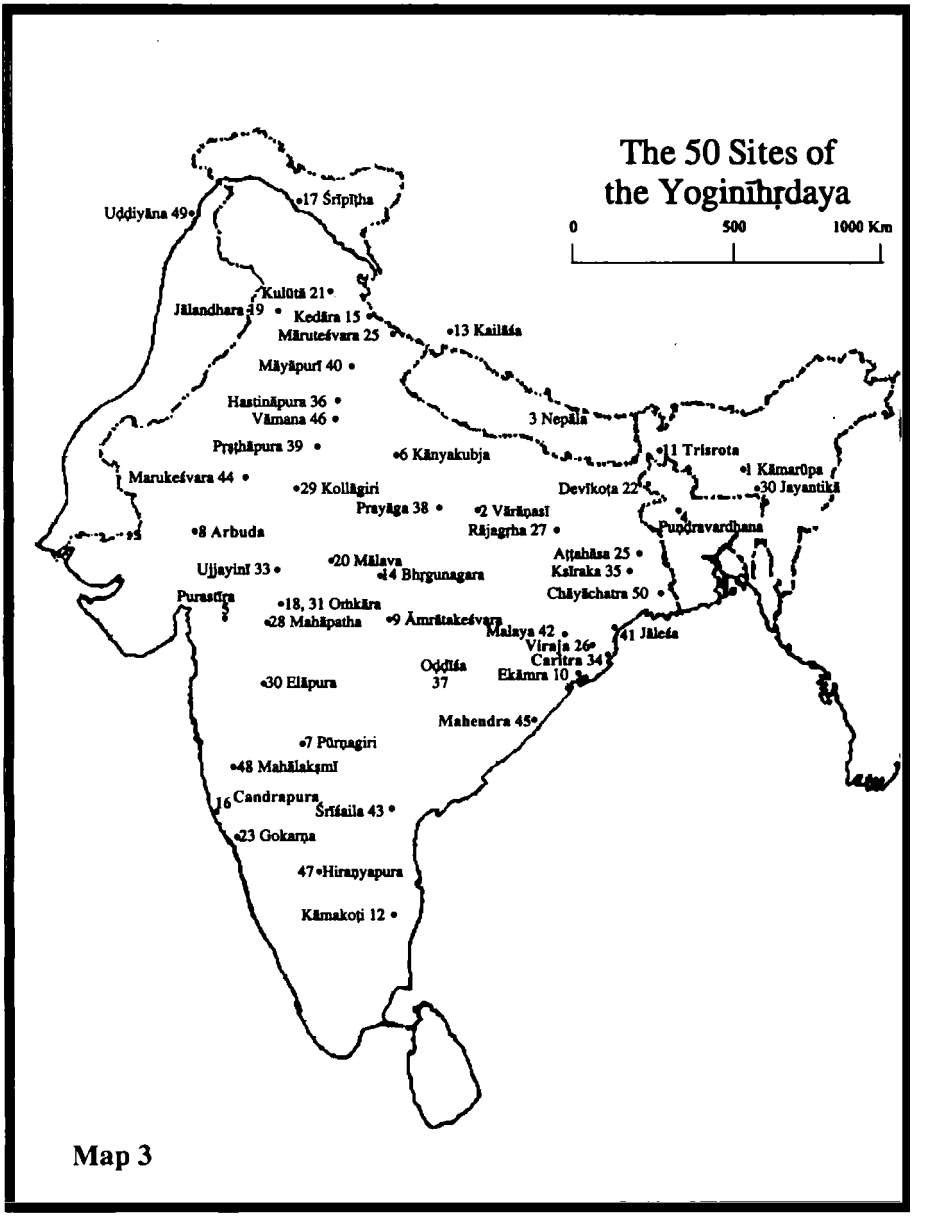
Map 1

Unidentified: 37 and 41.



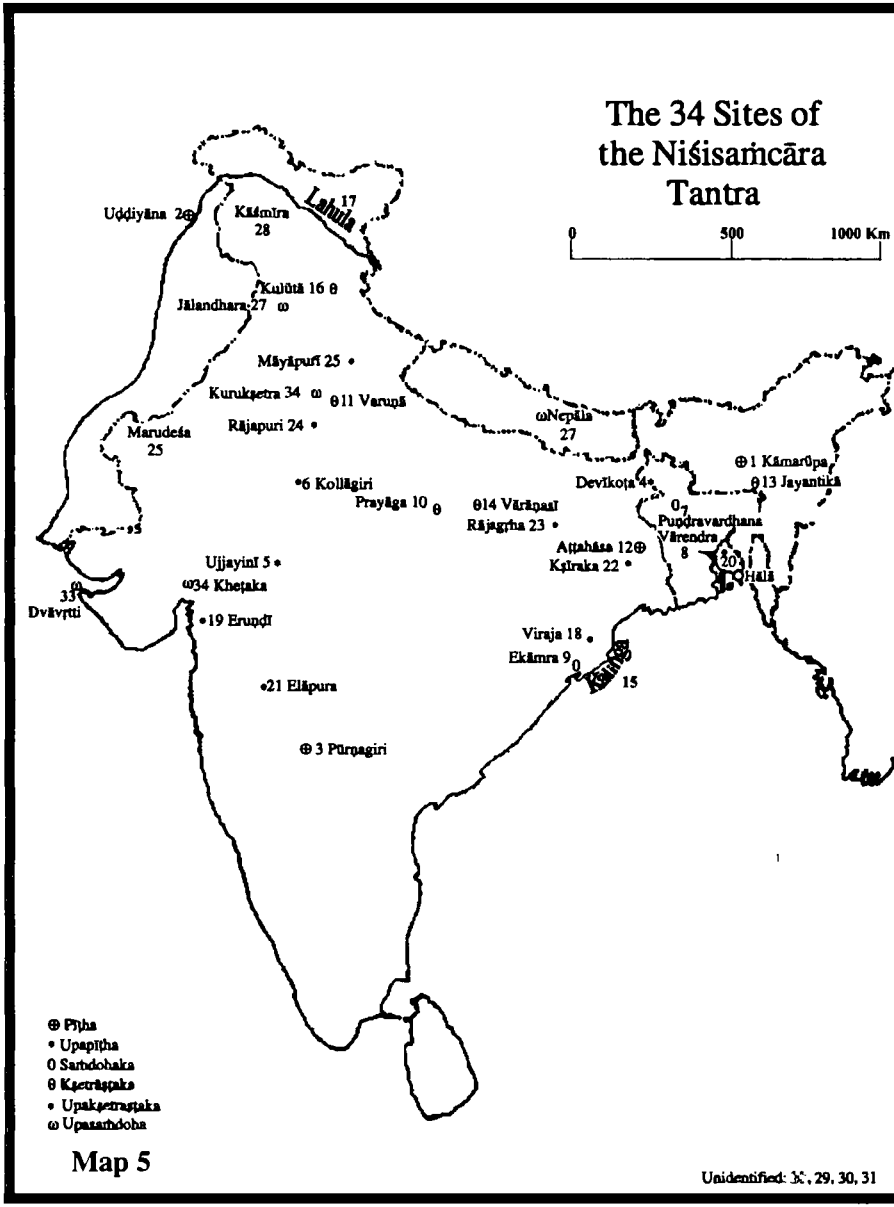
Map 2

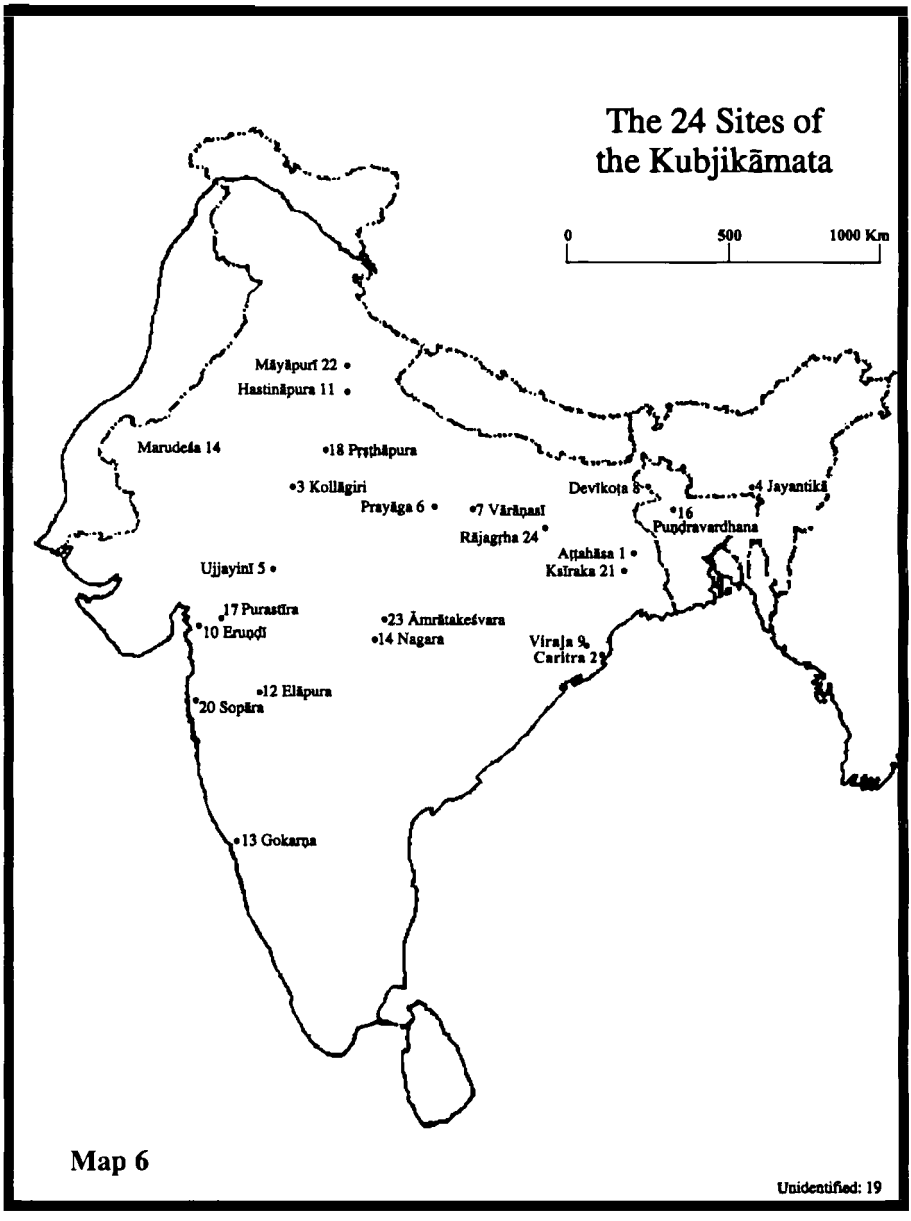
Unindentified: 2, 10, 15, 16, 17, 42, 43, 44

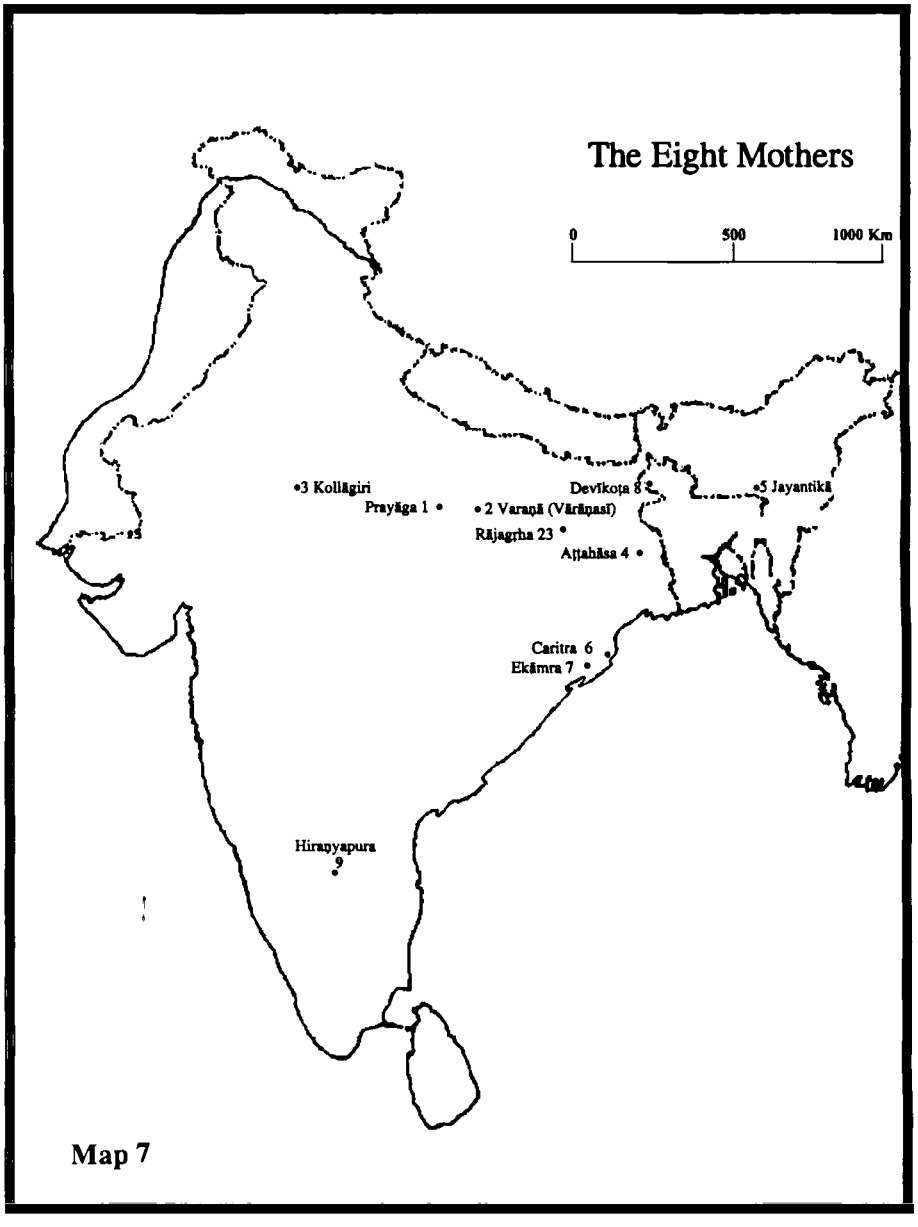

The 50 Sites of
the Yoginīhṛdaya
0
500
1000 Km
Uḍḍiyāna 49
17 Śrīpīṭha
Kulūtā 21
Jālandhara 19
Kedāra 15
Māruteśvara 25
13 Kailāśa
Māyāpurī 40
Hastināpura 36
Vāmana 46
3 Nepāla
Prṣṭhāpura 39
6 Kānyakubja
11 Trisrota
Marukeśvara 44
29 Kollāgiri
Devīkoṭa 22
1 Kāmarūpa
30 Jayantikā
Prayāga 38
2 Vārāṇasī
Puṇḍravardhana
8 Arbuda
Rājagṛha 27
Aṭṭahāsa 25
20 Mālava
Kaśraka 35
Ujjayinī 33
4 Bhṛgunagara
Chāyāchatra 50
Purasīra
18, 31 Oṁkāra
28 Mahāpatha
9 Āmrātakeśvara
Malaya 42
41 Jālaśa
Viraja 26
Caritra 34
Oḍḍīśa
37
Ekāmra 10
30 Elāpura
Mahendra 45
7 Pūrṇagiri
48 Mahālakṣmī
16 Candrapura
Śrīśaila 43
23 Gokarṇa
47 Hiraṇyapura
Kāmakoṭi 12

Map 3


The 24 Sites of
the Jayadrathayāmala
0
500
1000 Km
8 Śrīpīṭha
Māyāpurī 20
Marukeśvara 13
3 Kollāgiri
Prayāga 6
7 Vārāṇasī
4 Jayantikā
15
Puṇḍravardhana
Hāṭī 11
Rājagṛha 23
Aṭṭahāsa 1
Kṣīraka 21
Ujjayinī 5
17 Purastīra
22 Āmrātakeśvara
Kuḍyākeśī 18
10 Eruṇḍī
14 Nagara
Viraja 9
Caritra 2
16 Elāpura
19 Sopāra
Śrīśaila 24
12 Gokarṇa
Map 4
Unidentified: 11

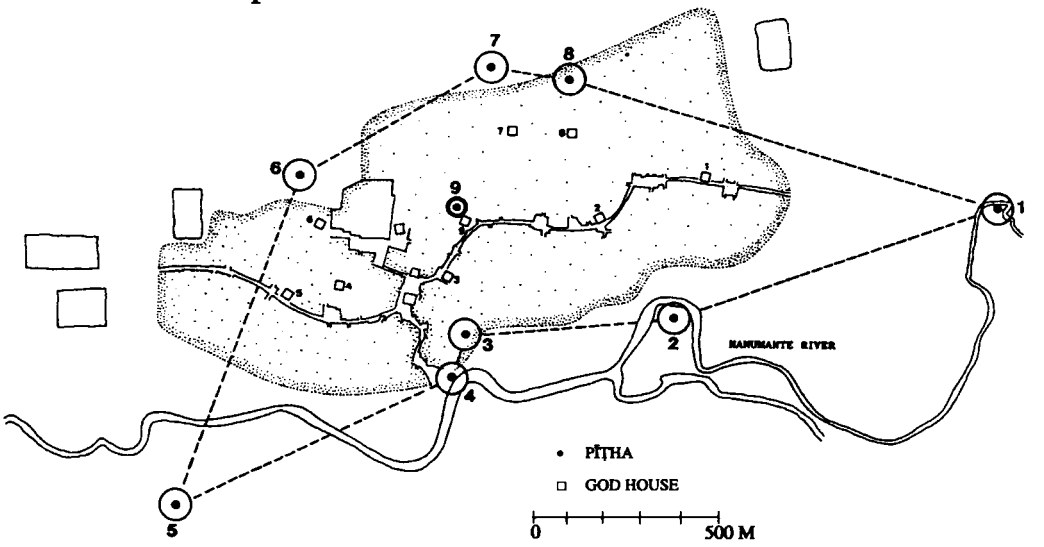

The 34 Sites of the Niśisaṁcāra Tantra
0
500
1000 Km
Uḍḍiyāna 2⊕
Kāśmīra 28
Lahula 17
Kulūtā 16 θ
Jālandhara 27 ω
Māyāpurī 25 •
Kurukṣetra 34 ω
θ11 Varuṇā
Rājapuri 24 •
Marudeśa 25
ωNepāla 27
⊕1 Kāmarūpa
θ13 Jayantikā
•6 Kollāgiri
Prayāga 10 θ
θ14 Vārāṇasī
Rājagṛha 23 •
Devīkoṭa 4•
Puṇḍravardhana Vārendra 8
Aṭṭahāsa 12⊕
Kṣīraka 22 •
Hāṭā
Ujjayinī 5 •
ω34 Kheṭaka
33 ω Dvāvṛtti
•19 Eraṇḍī
Viraja 18 •
Ekāmra 9 0
Kāmarūpa
15
•21 Elāpura
⊕3 Pūrṇagiri
⊕ Pīṭha
• Upapīṭha
0 Sarndohaka
θ Kṣetrāṣṭaka
• Upakṣetraṣṭaka
ω Upasarndoha
Map 5
Unidentified: X, 29, 30, 31


The 24 Sites of
the Kubjikāmata
0
500
1000 Km
Māyāpurī 22
Hastināpura 11
Marudeśa 14
18 Pṛṣṭhāpura
3 Kollāgiri
Prayāga 6
7 Vārāṇasī
Rājagṛha 24
Devīkoṭa 8
4 Jayantikā
16
Puṇḍravardhana
Aṭṭahāsa 1
Kāmaruka 21
Ujjayinī 5
17 Purastīra
10 Eruṇḍī
23 Āmrātakeśvara
14 Nagara
Viraja 9
Caritra 2
12 Elāpura
20 Sopāra
13 Gokarṇa
Map 6
Unidentified: 19


The Eight Mothers
0
500
1000 Km
•3 Kollāgiri
Prayāga 1 •
• 2 Varaṇā (Vārāṇasī)
Devīkoṭa 8 •
•5 Jayantikā
Rājagṛha 23 •
Aṭṭahāsa 4 •
Caritra 6
Ekāmra 7 •
Hiraṇyapura
9

Map 7

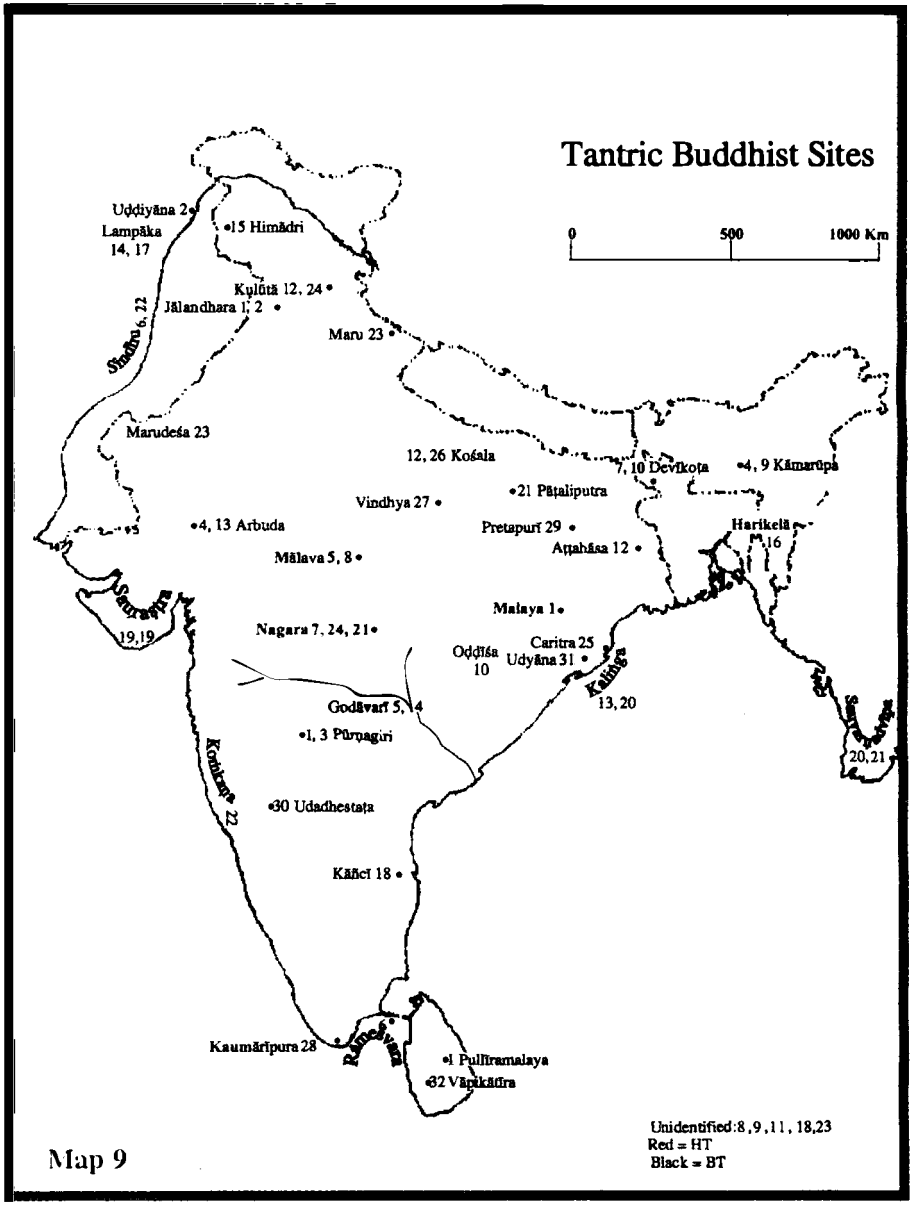
The Eight Mothers surrounding Bhaktapur



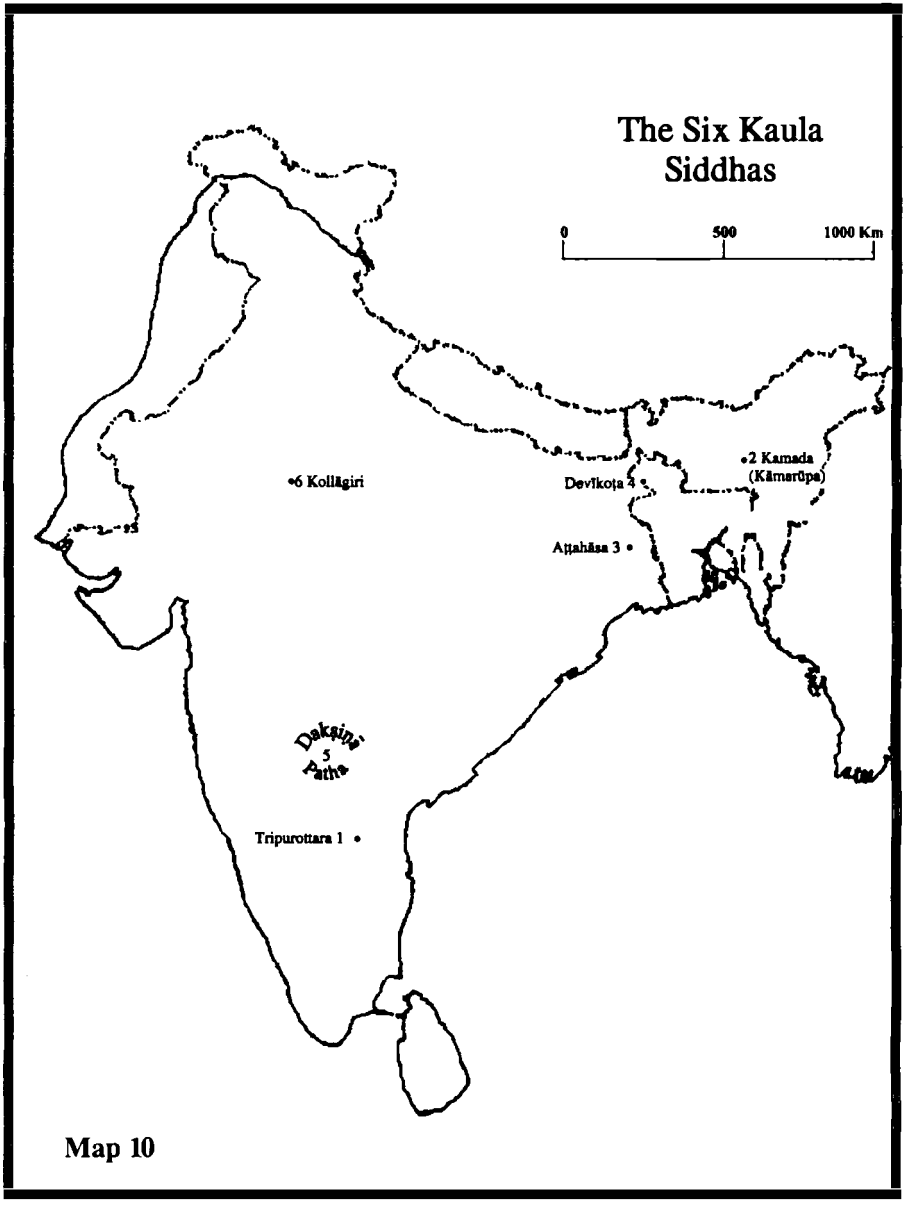
1) Brāhmaṇī 2) Maheśvarī 3)Kumārī 4) Vaiṣṇavī 5) Vārāhī 6) Indrāṇī 7) Mahākālī
8) Mahālakṣmī 9) Tripurā

Map courtesy of Niels Gutschow

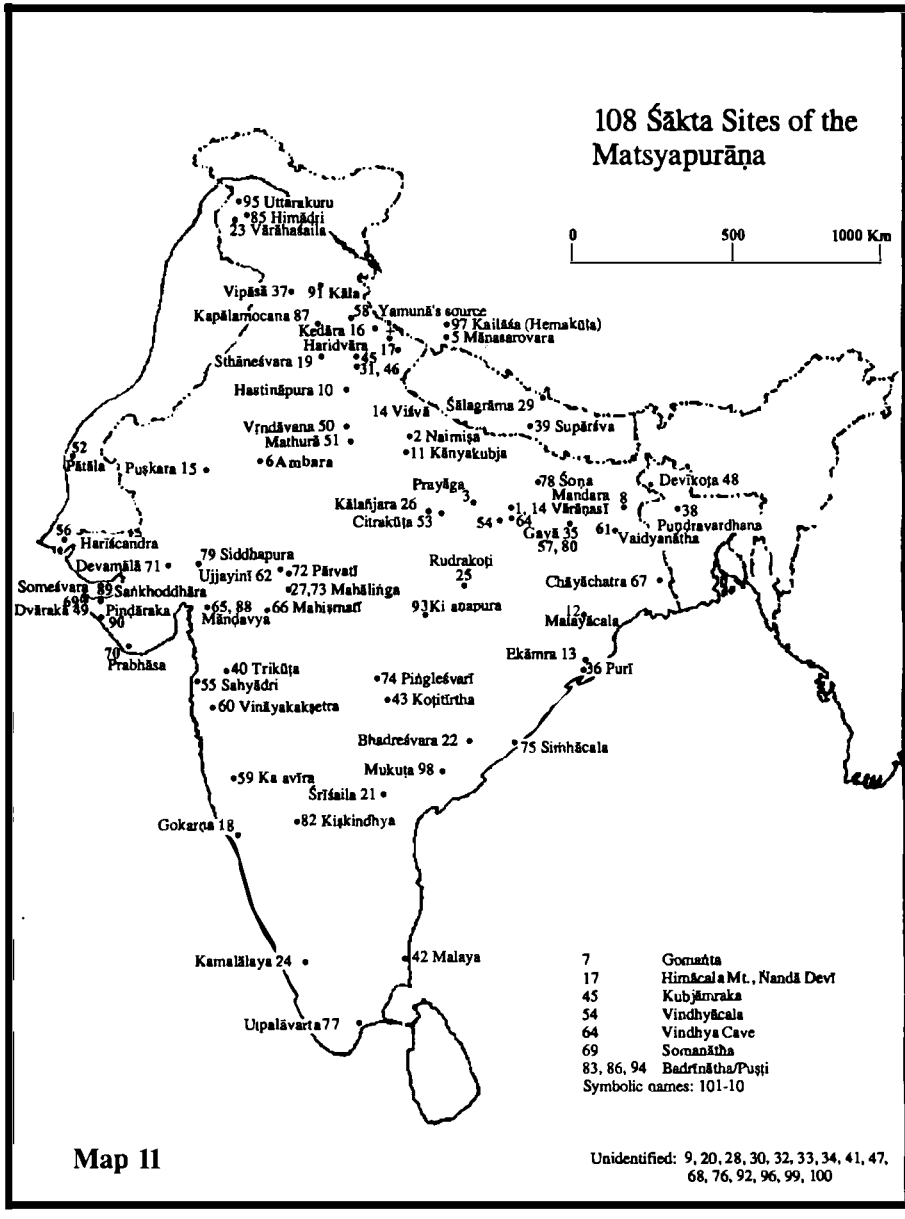
Map 8


Tantric Buddhist Sites
0
500
1000 Km
Uḍḍiyāna 2
Lampāka
14, 17
15 Himādri
Kulūtā 12, 24
Jālandhara 1, 2
Sindhu 6, 22
Maru 23
Marudeśa 23
12, 26 Kośala
7, 10 Devīkoṭa
4, 9 Kāmarūpa
21 Pāṭaliputra
Vindhya 27
Pretapurī 29
Aṭṭahāsa 12
Harikelā
16
4, 13 Arbuda
Mālava 5, 8
Malaya 1
Saurāṣṭra
19, 19
Nagara 7, 24, 21
Oḍḍīśa
10
Caritra 25
Udyāna 31
Kaliṅga
13, 20
Godāvarī 5, 14
1, 3 Pūrṇagiri
Kaverī
20, 21
Konkaṇa 22
30 Udadhestaṭa
Kāñcī 18
Kaumārīpura 28
Rāmeśvara
1 Pullīramalaya
32 Vāpikāṭīra
Unidentified: 8, 9, 11, 18, 23
Red = HT
Black = BT

Map 9


The Six Kaula Siddhas
0
500
1000 Km
•6 Kollāgiri
Devīkoṭa 4 •
•2 Kamada (Kāmarūpa)
Aṭṭahāsa 3 •
Dakṣiṇa Patha
5
Tripurottara 1 •

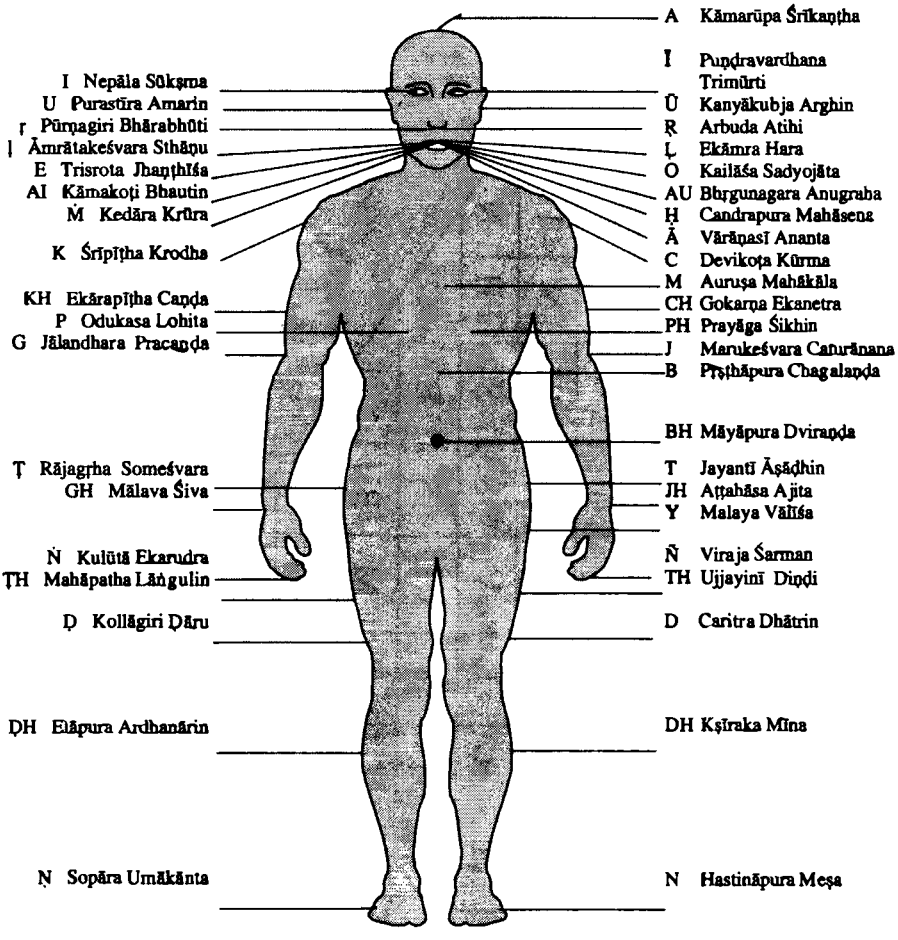
Map 10


108 Śākta Sites of the Matsyapurāṇa
0
500
1000 Km
•95 Uttarakuru
•85 Himādri
23 Vārāhaśaila
Vipāśā 37
91 Kāla
Kapālamocana 87
58 Yamunā's source
Kedāra 16
•97 Kailāśa (Hemakūṭa)
•5 Mānasarovara
Haridvāra 17
Sthāneśvara 19
45
31, 46
Hastināpura 10
14 Viśvā
Śālagrāma 29
Vṛndāvana 50
Mathurā 51
•2 Naimiṣa
•11 Kānyakubja
•39 Supārśva
52
Pātāla
Puṣkara 15
•6 Ambara
•78 Śona
Mandara 8
Devīkoṭa 48
Prayāga 3
Kālañjara 26
Citrakūṭa 53
54
1, 14 Vārāṇasī
64
•38
56
95
Hariścandra
Gayā 35
57, 80
61
Puṇḍravardhana
Vaidyanātha
Devamālā 71
79 Siddhapura
Ujjayinī 62
•72 Pārvatī
Rudrakoṭi 25
Someśvara 89
Śaṅkhoddhāra
•27,73 Mahāliṅga
Chāyāchatra 67
Dvāraka 49
Piṇḍāraka
•65, 88
•66 Mahiṣmatī
93 Kiṣkindhā
12
Mālyavāca
Māṇḍavya
90
Ekāmra 13
70
Prabhāsa
•40 Trikūṭa
•36 Purī
55 Sahyādri
•74 Piṅgleśvarī
•60 Vināyakakṣetra
•43 Koṭitīrtha
Bhadreśvara 22
•75 Simhācala
Mukuṭa 98
•59 Karavīra
Śrīśaila 21
Gokarṇa 18
•82 Kiṣkindhya
Kamalālaya 24
•42 Malaya
Utpalāvarta 77
7 Gomanta
17 Himācala Mt., Nandā Devī
45 Kubjāmraka
54 Vindhyācala
64 Vindhya Cave
69 Somanātha
83, 86, 94 Badrīnātha/Puṣṭi
Symbolic names: 101-10
Map 11
Unidentified: 9, 20, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 41, 47, 68, 76, 92, 96, 99, 100

						KṢ						
ṛ	Ṛ	ḷ	Ḷ	E	AI	O	AU	Ṁ	Ḥ	K	KH	G
	Ū	Ḍ	ḌH	Ṇ	T	TH	D	DH	N	P	GH	
		U	ṬH	R	L	V	Ś	Ṣ	PH	Ṅ		
			Ī	Ṭ	Y	H	S	B	C			
				I	Ñ	M	BH	CH				
					Ā	JH	J					
						A						

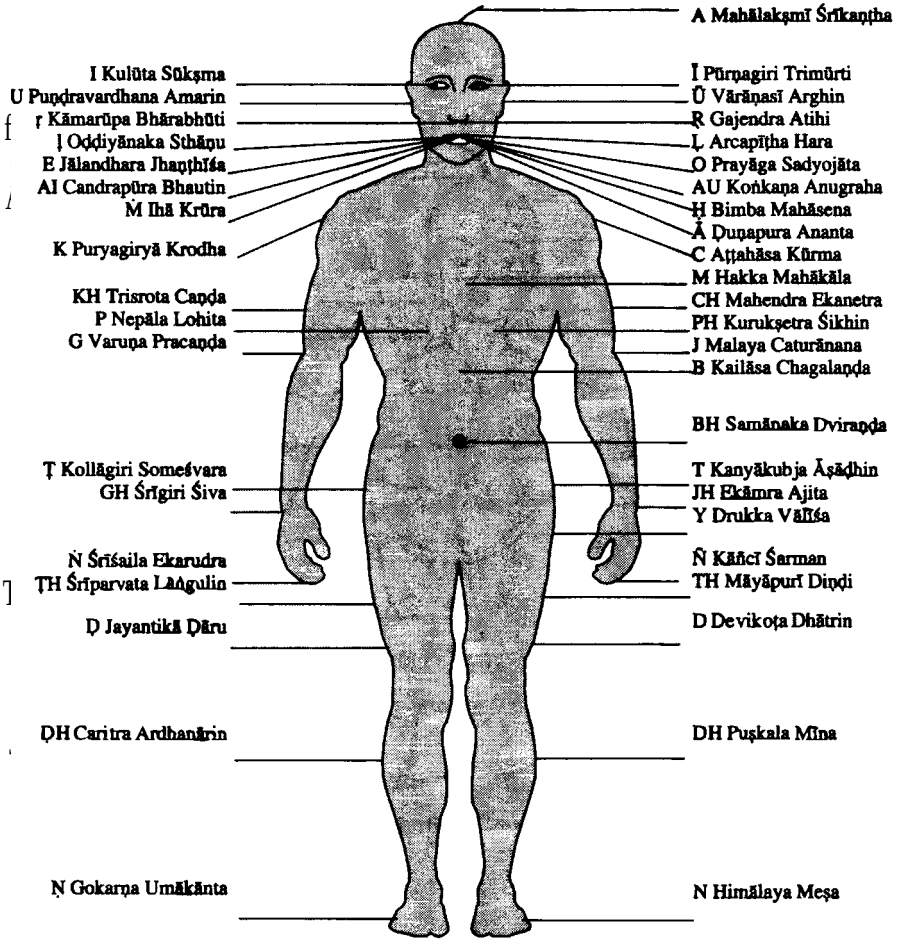
KĀMARŪPA

Figure 1



B	Pṛṣṭhāpura	Chagalaṇḍa	Spine	V	Mahendra	Khaḍgin	Sinews
BH	Māyāpura	Dviraṇḍa	Navel	Ś	Varuṇā	Vakīśa	Bones
M	Auruṣa	Mahākāla	Heart	Ṣ	Hiraṇyapura	Śveta	Marrow
Y	Malaya	Vālīśa	Skin	S	Mahālakṣmī	Bhṛgu	Semen
R	Śrīśaila	Bhujaṅga	Blood	H	Uḍḍiyāna	Lākulīśa	Breath
L	Eruṇḍī	Pināķin	Flesh	KṢ	Chāyāchatra	Saṁvartaka	Anger

Figure 2a



B	Kailāsa	Chagalaṇḍa	Spine	V	Magadhāpura	Khaḍgin	Sinews
BH	Samānaka	Dviraṇḍa	Navel	Ś	Vāruṇa	Vakīśa	Bones
M	Hakka	Mahākāla	Heart	Ṣ	Vindhyā	Śveta	Marrow
Y	Drukka	Vāliśa	Skin	S	Brahmavāhā	Bhṛgu	Semen
R	Pāripātra	Bhujaṅga	Blood	H	Sarasvatī	Lākuliśa	Breath
L	Surārājya	Pināki n	Flesh	KṢ	Chāyāchatra	Saṁvartaka	Anger

Figure 2b

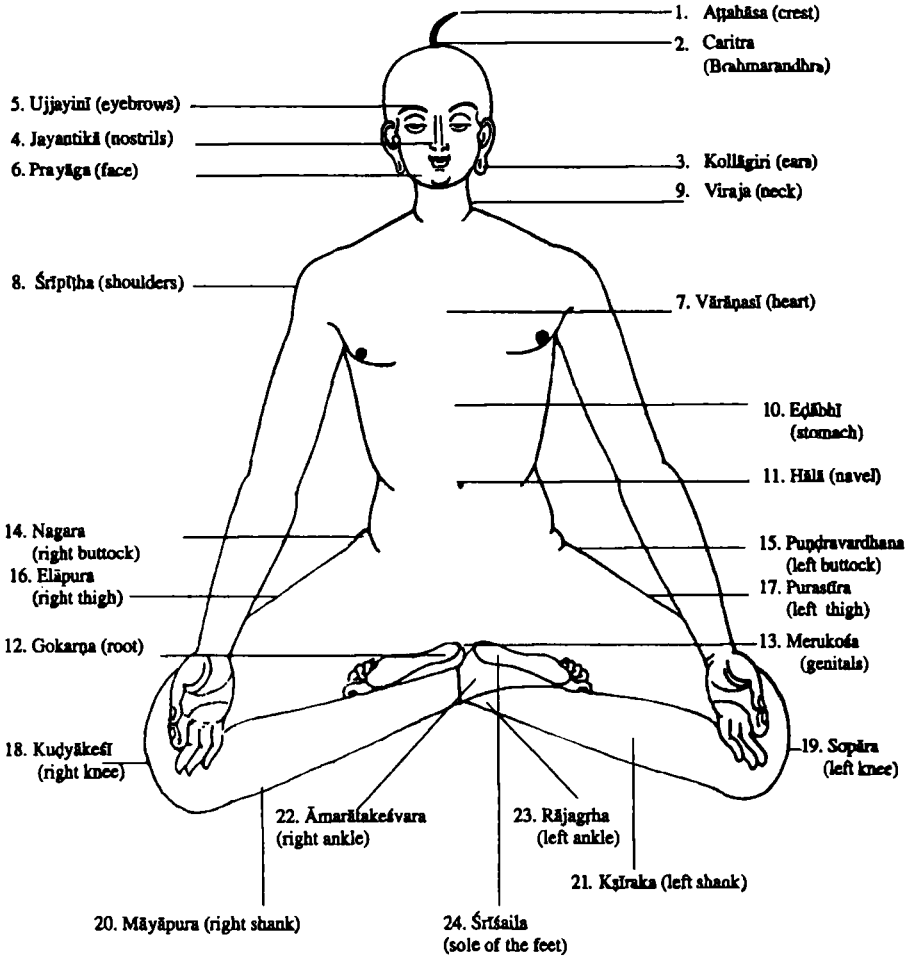

1. Aṭṭahāsa (crest)
2. Caritra (Brahmarandhra)
3. Kollāgiri (ears)
4. Jayantikā (nostrils)
5. Ujjayinī (eyebrows)
6. Prayāga (face)
7. Vārāṇasī (heart)
8. Śrīpīṭha (shoulders)
9. Viraja (neck)
10. Eḍībhī (stomach)
11. Hālā (navel)
12. Gokarṇa (root)
13. Merukośa (genitals)
14. Nagara (right buttock)
15. Puṇḍravardhana (left buttock)
16. Elāpura (right thigh)
17. Purasfīra (left thigh)
18. Kuḍyākeśī (right knee)
19. Sopāra (left knee)
20. Māyāpura (right shank)
21. Kṣīraka (left shank)
22. Āmarāṭakeśvara (right ankle)
23. Rājagṛha (left ankle)
24. Śrīśaila (sole of the feet)

Figure 3

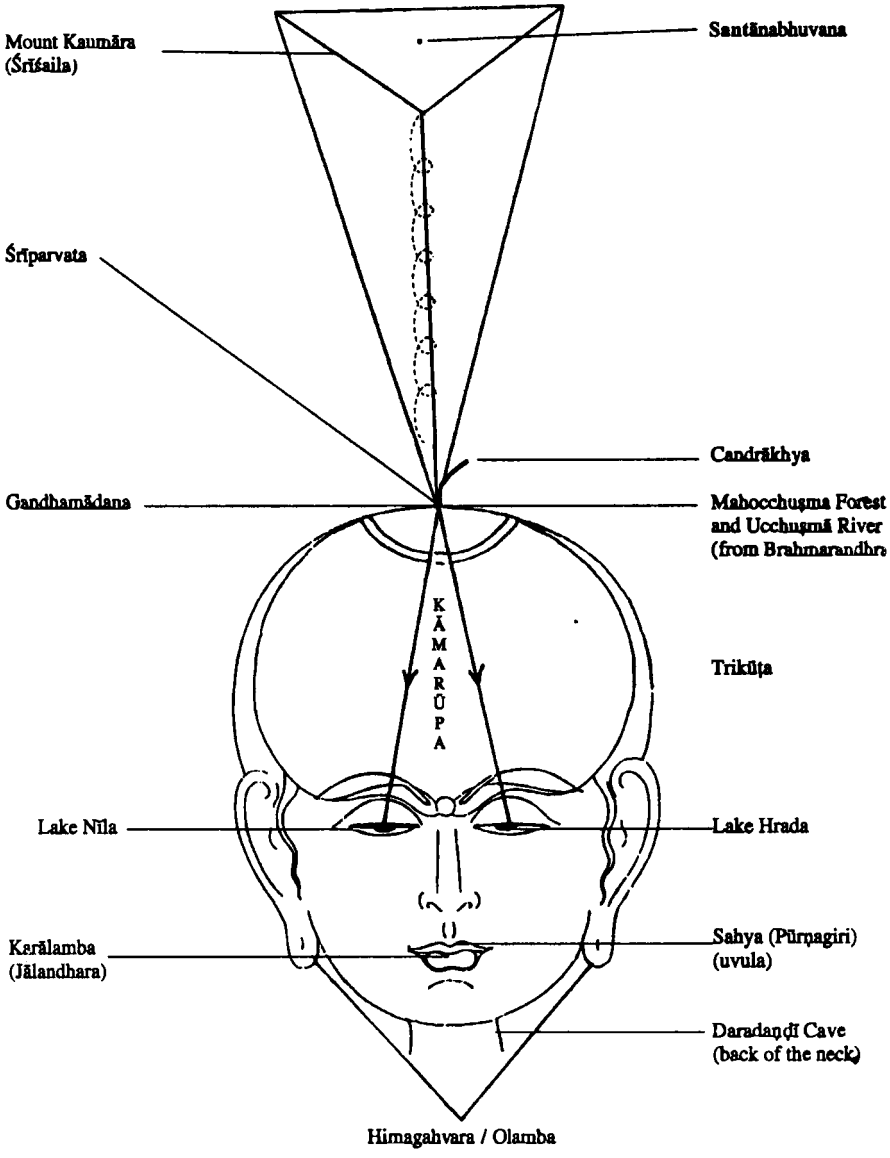

Mount Kaumāra
(Śrīśaila)
Santānabhuvana
Śrīparvata
Candrākhya
Gandhamādana
Mahocchuṣma Forest
and Ucchuṣmā River
(from Brahmarandhra
KĀMARŪPA
Trikūṭa
Lake Nīla
Lake Hrada
Kaṛālamba
(Jālandhara)
Sahya (Pūrṇagiri)
(uvula)
Daradaṇḍī Cave
(back of the neck)
Himagahvara / Olamba

Figure 4

On the corners:			
3 Doorkeepers	Tamo'ri	Niśāṭana	Kālānala
3 Bhairavas	Lākulin	Bhṛgu	Saṁvarta
On the sides:			
3 Doors	Wind (*vāta*)	Bile (*pitta*)	Phlegm (*śaleṣmika*)
3 Bolts	Pervasive (*vyāpinī* < Passion)	Equal One (*samanā* < Anger)	Transmental (*unmanā* < Greed)
3 Energies	Will (*icchā*)	Knowledge (*jñanī*)	Action (*kriyā*)
3 Deities	Brahmā	Viṣṇu	Maheśvara
3 Walls	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
3 Paths	Iḍā	Piṅgalā	Madhyamā
3 Junctions	Exhalation	Inhalation	Retention

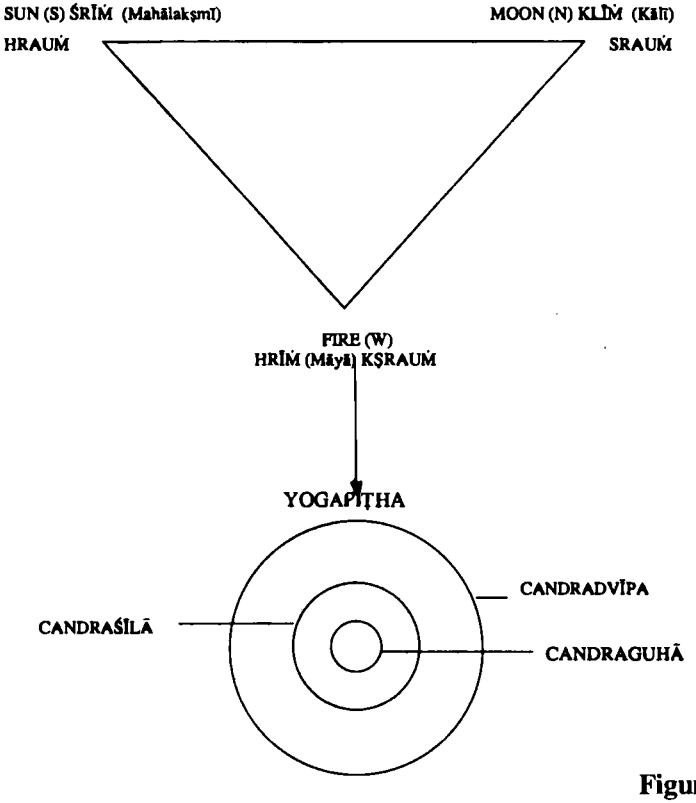


Figure 5

~5~

KUBJIKĀ, THE ANDROGYNOUS GODDESS

Potency, Transformation and Reversal in the Theophanies of the Kubjikā Tantras

Although Kubjikā is an Indian goddess, nowadays she is virtually unknown in India and her worship there has practically ceased.[1] Even so there is a considerable body of literature associated with her cult, most of which is unedited.[2] Virtually all the manuscripts of the Tantras of this Kaula cult are either Nepalese or copies of Nepalese originals. The earliest manuscripts recovered in the Kathmandu Valley belong to the eleventh century, which gives us an indication of the time the cult came to the Valley. Although initiation was not origi-

[1] References to the goddess Kubjikā outside the Tantras of the Paścimāmnāya, the Western Kaula Tradition, are relatively rare. A passage relating to a manta called Umāmaheśvaracakra which is part of her complex cult is found in the *Agnipurāṇa*. A short medieval tract, probably of Bengali or Maithili origin, called the *Kubjikātantra* has been was published by Chatterjee in Bengali script in the late 19th century. There is, however, very little connection, if any, between this Tantra and those of the earlier Kubjikā corpus.

[2] The main Sanskrit texts I have consulted for this paper are as follows: the *Manthānabhairavatantra*, *Kumārikākhaṇḍa* (MBT (KuKh)) and *Yogakhaṇḍa* (MBT (YKh)). These are two of the three sections of this Tantra, the whole of which is not less than 24,000 verses (*śloka*) long. I have also made use of the *Ciñcinīmatasārasamuccaya* (CMSS) which is a short tract of about 2,000 verses that I have edited for my personal use. Other sources are manuscripts of the *Kularatnoddyota* (KRU) and the *Śrīmatottaratantra*. An incomplete edition of the latter text has been published under the name *Gorakṣasaṁhitā* (vol. 1) edited by Janārdana Pāṇḍeya, Sarasvatībhavanagranthamālā, Sampūrṇānanda Sanskrit University, 1976. The *Kubjikāmatatantra*, the root text of this school, has been edited by Goudriaan and Schoterman.

nally restricted to particular castes,[3] nowadays, only members of the higher Newar castes have a right to be initiated. Moreover, only Rājopādhyāya Brahmins, the former family priests of the Malla kings, can give initiation to those who do not belong to their own family.[4] Their Kṣatrīya assistants, called Karmācaryas, a corrupt form of the Sanskrit, Kramācārya, can initiate their own family members. Kubjikā is worshipped exclusively by initiates in private shrines reserved for esoteric cult deities who, for Hindus, are all goddesses and their associated entourage. The Buddhists have their own analogous forms of initiations and their deities are those of the so-called Supreme Yoga (*anuttarayoga*) Tantras.

Although the texts describe a number of iconic forms of the goddess Kubjikā, hardly any have been found. She can and, it seems, is usually, if not always, worshipped in her *maṇḍala*; and even that is not essential. Daily worship can be performed by an initiate in his own home. It can be offered to a triangular diagram which he traces with his finger on the palm of his hand at the beginning of the rite and then imagines to be in front of him as a representation of the Yoni of the goddess.

Myths of Origin

The oldest myth concerning the origin of the goddess Kubjikā and the transmission of her cult is told in the first three chapters of the *Kubjikāmatatantra*. The scene opens with the coming of Bhairava

[3] The original model for the adept of the Kubjikā cult is that of the renouncer yogi. Even so, the lists of followers of this tradition recorded in the MBT and elsewhere clearly indicate that people of all castes and women were initiated. The relative importance of the renunciant with respect to the householder also seems to have eroded away. Thus in one part of the MBT (KuKh) the renunciant is exalted above the householder as able to attain the perfections of Yoga (*siddhi*) (ibid., 11/94-6). Elsewhere we find that the reverse is the case and the householder is declared to be at least the equal, if not superior to the renunciant and the teachings are declared to be specifically for him. Interiorisation of the ritual and prescribed modes of behaviour and dress, clearly contribute to the domestication of the Kubjikā cult. At present it is virtually entirely a cult for householders. See note 11.

[4] On Newar castes and their structure, see *The Newars* by Gopal Singh Nepali, Himalayan Booksellers, Kathmandu, 1965.

to Himavat's ashram where he meets his daughter, the virgin (*kumārikā*) Kālikā. Bhairava shows her the entire universe as "burning with the quality (*guṇa*) of the bliss of the empowering energy (*ājñā* of the Transmission of the Teaching)".[5] This vision makes of her "an awakened being" (*prabuddhabhāvātmā*). She is then told that she must become quality-less and so abandon her form as a young virgin (*kumāritva*). The god then imparted the teachings to her and, ordering her to go to Mount Kumāra, he disappeared. She is amazed by what she has seen and in this state of "supreme wonder" she questions distraught: "who are you and what am I doing?"[6] After much thinking, she abandons her companions and goes to the Mountain of the Moon (*Candraparvata*) to look for Bhairava. This mountain is said to lie to the west of Meru.[7] It is a beautiful tropical paradise, a

[5] '*Ājñā*' is an important technical term found particularly in the Kubjikā Tantras. Literally, the word means 'permission' or 'command' and so, by extension, 'grace' or 'empowerment'. Through the power of '*ājñā*' the deity dispenses '*adhikāra*'. This word denotes the fitness or suitability of a person or being to perform a certain task or fulfill a function. It can be translated as 'authority'. A god, for example, may be given the authority — *adhikāra* — to govern a particular world order by the permission/ command/ grace — *ājñā* — of the Supreme Deity. The Master transmits it as an empowering energy to his disciple in the course of initiation.

The psychic centre between the eyebrows where the teacher is said to reside is called '*ājñācakra*'. This is because the mental faculties lie here and beyond it is the domain of '*ājñā*' which is that of Kubjikā as the energy *unmanā* — 'Beyond Mind'. This is the energy of the will (*icchāśakti*) that conjoins with the transcendental sphere of Śiva (*śāmbhavapada*). It seems that the technical use of this term was developed particularly in this Kaula school but is not unknown outside it. In the *Kṛṣṇayāmala*, the goddess Tripurā is said to be "under the control of Kṛṣṇa's command (*ājñā*)" (KY 4/8). In a more technical sense, a name of the goddess Lalitā in the *Lalitāsahasranāmastotra* of the *Brahmāṇḍapurāna* is '*ājñā*'. In the *Liṅgapurāṇa* Śiva says that "initially my eternal command (*ājñā*) arose out of my mouth". See LSNS, translation by Suryanarayana Murti, p. 174.

[6] KMT 1/54-5.

[7] The Western Tradition — Paścimamnāya — is that of the goddess Kubjikā. The word 'paścima' means both 'west' and 'subsequent'. Thus the following statements can have two possible meanings:

place where, the text says, "Kāmadeva has taken up his residence".[8] This mountain "made of the beauty of the moon" has at its centre a beautiful Stone (*śilā*). It is in fact a *maṇḍala* with symbolic doors, fortified walls and arches. The goddess is again astonished when she beholds the Stone. The previous state of wonder with its ensuing confusion was brought about by her cosmic vision that induced her to wonder throughout the world in search of the god. The present state of wonder, in a sense, reverses all that occured in the previous one. She is astonished not by the vision of a universal reality but by that of a marvellous particular. Instead of it inducing her to action and "waking up" she mounts the Stone and falls into a yogic trance brought about by the energy of empowerment (*ājñā*). As a result, the world is enveloped in her energy and merged into her as she assumes the form of a Liṅga (*liṅgarūpā*).[9]

paścimedam kṛtaṁ deva pūrvabhāgavivarjitam (KMT 2/20cd) *paścimaṁ sarvamārgāṇām* (ibid. 2/21c).

They can mean: "This, O god, is (the tradition of the) west / (the tradition which is) subsequent devoid of the (tradition of the) east/ prior (one)."

And: "The last / western (portion) of all the paths".

Of the two options it seems that in these references the sense of '*paścima*' seems to be that which follows after in time. It is the latest Tradition. Bhairava has told the goddess that before (*pūrva*) he had given her the teachings, now it is she who has to propagate them. In this sense '*paścima*' would mean 'subsequent'. The distinction is temporal rather than spatial. The spatial is, however, more common. The association repeatedly made in the MBT between the Paścimāmnāya and Sadyojāta indicates an adaptation of a Siddhānta model. Of Sadāśiva's five faces which teach various doctrines, Sadyojāta is the western face. Although both directional and temporal symbolism are found in the texts, there is a greater emphasis on the former rather than the latter. In space, the Paścimāmnāya is closely associated with the Mountain of the Moon, a place that the goddess likes in a special way and underscores the goddess's strong lunar associations. It is also the place that she sets off from to spread the teachings in the land of Bhārata. Its location to the "west of Meru" (ibid., 1/59c) does not seem to be coincidental. In time the Paścimāmnāya is the latest and, in a sense, the last because it is the Kaula tradition of the Kaliyuga, the fourth and last aeon. The previous three aeons are associated with the three traditions of the other three cardinal directions.

[8] Ibid. 1/57-9.

[9] Ibid. 1/63-6.

Now it is the god's turn to be overawed to see that there, in the absence of the goddess's creation (*śāmbhavīsṛṣṭi*), everything shares in the perfection of absolute being (*nirāmaya*). Everything is immersed in the darkness of the unmanifest absolute except the place where the goddess in the form of a Liṅga resides which, due to its brilliance, he calls the Island of the Moon. The god now abandons his unmanifest form and begins to praise the Liṅga. This arouses the goddess from the oblivion of her blissful introverted contemplation and she bursts apart the Liṅga to emerge from it in all the splendour of her powerful ambivalence. Dark as "blue collyrium" she is "beautiful and ugly and of many forms". Bhairava asks the goddess for the favour of empowerment (*ājñā*), confessing that her terrible austerity is harmful to him. The goddess is overcome with emotion and shame and becomes bent over (*kubjikārūpā*).

The goddess is not embarassed just because she has been asked to be the god's teacher but because this implies that she must unite with him to make the transmission effective. The goddess who is "round" as the Liṅga becomes "crooked" as the triangular Yoni.[10] From the previously neutral indifference of transcendence, she must be aroused to become the fertile, erotic Yoni. The energy that is transmitted through the lineage of teachers is the spiritual energy of her aroused sexuality. It is the flow of HER emission. The energy of empowerment (*ājñā* — a feminine word) is her seminal fluid that is released through the conjunctio with her male partner. The god encourages her to unite with him by reminding her that the empowering energy (*ājñā*) she has to give is a product of their reciprocal relationship.

But for this union to be possible and complete, the goddess must travel around the Land of Bhārata. In her tour the goddess propa-

[10] Daniélou writes: "In the stage beyond manifestation the yoni is represented by the circle, the central point being the root of the *liṅga*. But in differentiated creation, the three qualities become distinct and the circle changes to a triangle. These are the essential figurations in the symbolism of yantras." *The Gods of India, Hindu Polytheism* by Alain Daniélou, Inner Traditions International Ltd., New York, 1985, p. 231. Daniélou thinks of the central point of the triangle as the *liṅga*. He says that "the *liṅga* stands for liberation in all the triangles of nature." (Ibid.)

gates the teachings by generating sons and daughters [11] by uniting with an aspect of Bhairava in the sacred places she visits. Minor conjunctios led to and make up the supreme conjunctio.

In her journey around the land of Bhārata the goddess assumes various forms in various places where she resides as the presiding goddess of that place. She thus reveals different aspects of herself according to where she becomes manifest. Thus in some of these places the erotic component of her nature becomes apparent. The form of the goddess is, as one would expect, particularly erotic in Kāmarūpa. There she is "made haughty by the enjoyment of passion" (*kāmabhogakṛṭāṭopā*). Her aroused erotic nature is symbolized by her fluidity; she melts or flows. She is also arousing, so she causes to melt and flow "the three worlds" by the force of her desire (*icchā*).

[11] To be initiated is to be born as the son or daughter of the god\ goddess and so belong to a family\ lineage\ caste along with other initiates. The motherhood of the goddess in this sense is as particular as it is universal. She travels to the sacred sites and there generates sons and daughters. In this way a household (*gṛha*) is formed. In this household the members belong to diverse clans (*gotra*) and distinctions in caste (*jāti*) are recognised. The stages of life marked by the requisite ritual purifications (*saṁskāra*) as outlined in the *smṛitis* is also reproduced. Initiation into this tradition largely follows the model of the Śaivasiddhānta in many respects and this is one of them. A necessary preliminary for initiation into Siddhānta Śaivism is the regeneration of the aspirant as a 'Śaiva Brahmin' (*śaivadvija*) who is fit to receive the initiation. The pattern here is largely based on the Vedic initiation in which the sacrificer must, for the purpose of the sacrifice, also be the priest and so must be transformed accordingly. The Kubjikā Tantras, as do the Tantras as a whole, prohibit caste distinctions in the ritual setting. At the same time, the distinction is never forgotten outside it. Moreover, initiates into other Tantric systems that are not Kaula are treated as if they belonged to a different caste. They should not eat the sacrificial offerings with initiated Kaulas who are enjoined to make every effort to avoid interdining with them. The *ghuṭhi* institution that operates amongst the castes in the Kathmandu Valley seems to be derived from the incorporation of family lineage and caste as aspects of a transmission. The ambiguity of having a caste and hence being a part of the conventional, 'orthodox' social order and being without caste as a progeny of the goddess is paralled to that which prevails between the identity of the initiate as being somehow both householder and a homeless renunciant. Cf. above, note 3.

Thus she is called both *śukrā* — 'female sperm' — and *śukravāhinī* — 'she who causes sperm to flow'. This reminds us of the ancient symbolic connection found in the Veda between moisture, water, rain, potent fluids (including sexual juices and milk) and energy. Moreover, her intense spiritual potency is symbolized by her powerful sexuality represented by her perpetual moisture as the Yoni full of seed.[12] Even she is amazed to perceive the intensity of her erotic state and for a moment loses consciousness, overawed by the powerful beauty of her own form. This is just as happens to the initiate in the rites of initiation due to the impact of the empowering energy of the Transmission. Here she is young and passionate (*kāminī*) and what she reveals gives even the god who merely beholds her here "the attainment of the fruit of the bliss of passion". Again, this is just what happens ideally at the climax of initiation when the Master (*ācārya*) gazes at the disciple who falls down "like a tree cut down from its root", liberated from the burden of Karma by the sudden rise of the energy of Kuṇḍalinī that pierces through his inner psychic centres. Aroused and arousing in this way, she is accordingly called the 'Mistress of Passion' (*kāmeśvarī*) and as such is similar to the goddess Tripurasundarī.

Kubikā's varied identity as a range of goddesses symbolizes the varied facets of her metaphysical being, her 'personality' if one would hazard to perceive one in a purely Tantric deity such as this one with a relatively scant mythology. Accordingly, in one of her iconic forms, she is depicted as having six faces. One of these is that of Tripurā.[13] Again, in the Sequence of the Young Woman which, along with that of the Girl and the Old Woman, is one of the three

[12] The temple to the goddess Kāmākhyā at Gauhati in Assam, the site identified by tradition as that of Kāmarūpa, enshrines the Yoni of the goddess. It is a round black stone that emerges from the ground. There is a cleft running down its centre from which water seeps, constantly fed by a small underground spring. The water that emerges becomes periodically red during which time the goddess is said to be in mensis.

[13] The goddess has three basic forms: I) Gross, 2) Cosmic, and 3) Triangular as the Yoni. The most important gross form in which she is visualized is described in chapter 29 of the MBT (KuKh) verse 34cd to the end. There she is said to be dark blue like a blue lotus and brilliant like the ashes of Kaula

ritual procedures through which she is worshipped, she is portrayed as Tripurā. Tripurā, young and attractive, is the acme of the erotic goddess. Her enchanting spirituality and perfect purity is intensely and vividly conveyed by her form as powerfully spiritual as it is erotic. Tripurā is the "Mistress of Passion" (i.e. the primordial cosmogonic desire and energy of grace) par excellence. Incorporated into the goddess Kubjikā or as one of her manifestations, Kubjikā

(*vīra*) yogis. She has six faces, each with three eyes, which are the Sun and Moon with Fire in the centre. As the six spheres of her *maṇḍala*, she is of six types and is the power of consciousness that moves inwardly. She has twelve arms and is adorned with many garlands. She sits on a lion throne made of a corpse (*preta*) and is adorned with many ornaments. She is established in the Kula teachings and the countless Kula schools with their secrets. The lords of the snakes serve as her anklets, zone, belt, chock and tiara; scorpions are the rings on her fingers. In her twelve hands she carries: the stick of the world, a great lotus, ascetic's staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), noose, makes the gesture of fearlessness, a rosary, a bouquet of brilliant jewels, countless scriptures held along with a conch (*śaṅkhapāla*), a skull, a gesture of granting boons, trident, the mirror of Karma and the five immortal substances.

On her head is a garland of vowels and she has a necklace of letters. Around her throat is a necklace of 50 scorpions. Her six faces are as follows:

1) Uppermost: the goddess Parā. It is white as milk and possesses 17 energies.
2) Top of the head: Mālinī. This is the face of the sky. It is white like a conch or snow and is peaceful and serious (*saumya*).
3) Eastern face: Siddhayogeśvarī. It is white and distraught with rage. It is adorned with the form of Mantra.
4) Southern face: Kālikā. This face is terrible (*raudra*) with large protruding teeth. It is like a dark blue lotus.
5) Northern face: Tripurā. This face is red like a pomegranate flower. It is round like the full moon, peaceful and gives bliss.
6) Eastern face: This is that of Umākhecarī and is white.

The heart of the goddess shines like a clean mirror. Her countenance (presumably with its six faces) shines with the rays of the newly risen sun and is radiant with brilliant energy. The topknot is made of light that shines like countless lightening flashes. Her breast plate is made of brilliant energy and is hard to pierce. It is hard to behold and is of many forms. Her weapon is like the Fire of Time that licks up (the worlds) and is hard to bear. The text teaches that by visualizing the goddess in this way one should consume everything with the brilliant energy (*tejas*) of the goddess.

colonises the goddess Tripurā even as she reveals through her one of her dimensions.[14]

The androgynous form of the goddess as a "Yoni-Liṅga" (an expression used in the texts) is particularly important in this account and it is this aspect that is stressed when this myth is retold in a different, but essentially similar form in the *Manthānabhairavatantra*. There she assumes this form in a cave on Kailash, the axis mundi. Her crooked form when she emerges from the Liṅga is the Yoni, the manifest form, normally kept hidden, that the god desires to see. As the Liṅga in the Cave (*guhā*), she is withdrawn into herself — the Cave of the Yoni which, by another reversal, is the "Abode of Śaṁbhu".

[14] Tipurā and her yantra — Śrīcakra — serve as vehicles for the transmission of energy to other goddesses. This energy is symbolized and evidenced by an intensity of passion. Tripurā, a powerfully erotic goddess, serves to intensify the erotic energy of other goddesses. This appears to be the case with the goddess Kubjikā and so too, for example, with Rādhā in the *Kṛṣṇayāmala*. The KY declares that when Kṛṣṇa desires pleasure (*bhoga*) he contemplates himself in the form of a woman and Rādhā is created (chapter 12). But although generated by Kṛṣṇa for his own purposes, Rādhā turns out not to be interested in him even though she is described as 'passionate' (*susnigdhā*) (chapter 13). From chapter 16 to chapter 28, the Tantra describes Kṛṣṇa's struggle to attract Rādhā. In order to do this Kṛṣṇa transforms himself into Tripurā. The goddess then sends out the energies that surround her in Śrīcakra one sphere at a time to overcome her pride and fill her with desire. But Rādhā either makes these energies her own servants or frightens them away with the energies generated from her own body. Finally Tripurā herself set about the task and assumed the form of Mantra. She then recited the Mantras and displayed the gestures (*mudrā*) that are made when worshiping the triangle which is the innermost part of Śrīcakra. The gestures aroused Rādhā's passion and made her feel distressed by separation. The final gesture made her completely shameless. Finally, of course, the couple unite. This myth clearly illustrates how passionate sexual desire is a symbol of spiritual desire and how this must grow to an unbearable extreme to lead to final union. The shame Rādhā feels is the final stage she must abandon just as Kubjikā has to do to give herself up totally to the ravishment of the conjunctio. Here Tripurā plays the role of the erotic goddess who imparts her passion to Rādhā through the ritual she performs. Analogously, the incorporation of this goddess into the composite figure of Kubjikā serves to enhance her erotic power.

In this condition she is inactive. As the male phallus, she is impotent, immersed in formless contemplation. This conjunctio is accordingly called the Neuter (*napumṣakam*). It can be the 'neuter-male' absolute, in which case the term retains its regular neuter gender. It can also be the Female Eunoch: the feminine '*napumṣakā*'. In one myth of origin, recorded in the KRU, the goddess is generated from the god just as in the earlier myths, she emerges as the Yoni from the Liṅga. In another myth in the *Kularatnoddyota*, he is generated from her. In this case the Liṅga emerges out of the Yoni which is symbolized by the stone (*śilā* — a feminine word) that acts as the *maṇḍala* that envelopes its base in the account of the *Kubjikāmatatantra*.[15] In this way, these Tantras attempt to portray the goddess simultaneously as a polarity in a conjunctio and as containing within herself the conjunctio as a coincidentia oppositorum. She is simultaneously the two opposites. Reversals of opposites, their conjunction, identification and transcendence all operate together in the dynamics of the goddess. She relates to her male opposite both externally and internally. This gives rise to three possibilities:

1) The goddess is alongside the god in the centre of the matrix of energy that is the goddess.

[15] Sex change is a recurrent mythological theme. This is an example of the sex change of a feminine deity to a male one which, on the contrary to the somewhat easier and more common reverse change, involves not the loss of a sex organ but its acquisition. Another example is found in the *Hevajratantra*. The Buddha recommends that the adept identify with either of the two partners of the conjunctio, namely, the female Nairātymā or the male Hevajra. But even though either is initially presented as equally good for the solitary state (*ekavīra/ā*), the culminating conjunctio invariably takes place with Nairātmyā not Hevajra (called Heruka in the passage below) because the initiate must be reconstituted in the womb of his Mother. Consequently a question arises as to how the adept who has identified with Nairātmyā can couple to generate himself. The Buddha replies by saying: "The yogi who has identified with the goddess Nairātmyā should, abandoning the feminine form, assume the form of the Lord (*bhagavat*). After relinquishing the breasts, the Vajra (i.e. phallus) arises in the middle of the Lotus (i.e. vagina), the sides become the bells (i.e. testicles) and the stamen (i.e. the clitoris) becomes the Vajra. The other forms assumed are those of Heruka, the great being of erotic delight. The man who is one with Heruka attains the masculine form without any difficulty and by this the yogi whose powers are fully manifest attains the Gesture of Accomplishment." (*Hevajratantra*, 2/2/23-5)

The matrix of energy can be understood as that of Speech. This universal power through which the cycles of existence are perpetuated consists of the primary energy of the phonemes that together constitute the womb of mantras. Laid out in a triangular diagram, called Meru, they are assigned to forty-eight small triangles drawn within the triangle. In one scheme their contents are symbolized as forty-eight siddhas who reside in the Yoni. The last two, the letters 'HA' and 'KṢA', represent the god and the goddess in the centre in the vertical dimension. Energizing conjunctios are in this way occuring in a number of ways. Each male siddha is in conjunctio with the female triangle in which he resides. All of them together are contained in the one cosmic Yoni in the centre of which is the universal hierogamy that compliments and completes the individual conjunctios. The phonemes thus arranged according to their normal alphabetical order constitute the male Aggregate of Words — Śabdarāśi.

One could say that this is a dominantly male Yoni despite the multiple conjunctios that generate energy both universally and through each particular. To set the balance, a second Yoni is required which is dominantly female. This is achieved by laying out in the same fashion another order of the alphabet which is female. This is called Mālinī, 'the Goddess who wears the Garland of Letters'. This second Yoni represents the withdrawal of the energies into the primordial chaos in which male vowels ('seeds') are higgaldy-piggaldy conjoined to female consonants ('yonis'). These two, Śabdarāśi and Mālinī are, along with *maṇḍala* and *mudrā*, mantra and *vidyā*, one of a triad of conjunctios that together constitute the triadic universe. Their conjunction analogously makes the ritual powerful along with its mantras and yoga. In this case mantra is the Nine-syllabled mantra (*navātmāmantra*) which is the sound-body of the god Bhairava and the *vidyā* is the One-syllabled Vidyā (*ekākṣaravidyā*) which is the sound-body of Kubjikā. This is the syllable 'AIṂ'. Its triangular form with an upward slanting line toped by the nasalizing point nicely represents the Yoni with its clitoris (the female phallus) and the seed that arouses it to fertility and power.

2) The god is in the centre of the matrix alone.

In this scheme the Triangle of energies is made of the phonemes that are laid out around the sides. Śiva is in the centre surrounded by

his energies. Although one would think this to be the most fundamental scheme insofar as it represents the Liṅga in the Yoni — the most common conjunctio in India — this scheme is not at all as common as the previous one or the following.

3) She is in the centre of the matrix alone as a coincidentia oppositorum.

This is a very powerful and important option. The Yoni is not only a matrix of Mantric energy, it is also the world of the Transmission of the energy through the Lineages of the Traditions. The Triangle in this perspective has at its corners and centre the primary sacred seats (*pīṭha*) of the goddess. These are the well know, indeed paradigmatic sites: Pūrṇagiri, Jālandhara, Kāmarūpa and Oḍḍiyāna. In these centres reside the teachers of the primordial Divine Transmission (*divyaugha*). This scheme, incidently, in this, unmodified, form is just as we find in the innermost triangle of Śrīcakra.[16] It can be amplified with the addition of more sacred sites and there are a good number of variations on this basic pattern.[17]

[16] See my *The Canon of the Śaivāgama and the Kubjikā Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition*, State Univ. of New York Press, Albany, 1988, p. 178 n 110.

[17] The Yoni as a triangular figure represents a series of triads with which Kubjikā, as Śāmbhavīśakti, Śiva's energy in its cosmic form, is consequently identified. It is in this triadic form that the energy is manifestly active (*prasṛta*). These triads are:

1) a) The Transmental (*Manonmanī*) — Will (*Icchā*)
 b) The Pervasive (*Vyāpinī*) — Knowledge (*Jñāna*)
 c) The Equal One (*Samanā*) — Action (*Kriyā*)
2) The Drop (*Bindu*), Sound (*Nāda*) and Energy (*Kalā*).
3) The Drop (*Bindu*) as the Principle of Time (*Kālatattva,* i.e. Śiva), the Principle of Knowledge (*Vidyātattva*) and the Principle of the Self (*Ātmatattva*). These correspond to: i) the three qualities of Nature (*guṇa*), ii) Brahmā, Visṇu and Rudra (MBT (YKh) 14/2-4).
4) The Three Sequences. These are three sequences (*krama*) of ritual action. The ritual reenacts the creation of the world and so this triad, as do the others, generates the world. The triad consists of: i) The Sequence of the Girl (*Bālākrama*), ii) The Sequence of the Young Woman (*Yauvanākrama*), and iii) The Sequence of the Old Woman (*Vṛddhākrama*).
5) Corresponding to the previous triad is that of the three sequences (*krama*): i) Individual (*Āṇava*), ii) Empowered (*Śākta*), and iii) Pertaining to Śiva (*Śāmbhava*).

An important feature of this sacred geography is that it is always understood to have an internal equivalent as places within the inner, subtle body, technically called '*kulapiṇḍa*' — the body of energy. The goddess is moving through this body sanctifying its parts by filling them with the energy of empowerment (*ājñā*). Ultimately, this body of fully empowered energy is the body of the goddess. In one respect it has the shape of a human body with a head, arms and legs but in another, deeper aspect, it is the sacred sphere (*maṇḍala*) of the goddess which is her Yoni. Although the texts do not say so explicitly, it seems that the triangular land of Bhārata is just that Portion of the Virgin Goddess.

6) An important triad is that of the three energies: i) Supreme (*Parā*), ii) Middling (*Parāparā*), and iii) Inferior (*Aparā*). This triad is that of the goddess Mālinī who, as the crooked Kuṇḍalinī, is the Yoni (ibid., 12/20-23ab). The conections between the Kubjikā tradition and the Trika that flourished in Kashmir are numerous. This one is frequently stressed.

Just as triads are an important feature of the symbolism of the Yoni, so quaternities also feature prominently, the triad for the corners and an extra element for the centre. Further additions have been made to the basic pattern and so the *pīṭhas* are in various places said to be 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8. The group of eight is based on the principle of geometric compounding of groups of eight. The Goddess Parā, who is equated with Khañjinī ('She Who walks with a limp'), the alias of Kubjikā ('The Hunchback'), resides in all the eight Sacred Centres. She radiates her empowering energy (*ājñā*) throughout them through the medium of a teacher who is given the title 'Nātha' and so reveals the Tradition within it. The Supreme Goddess in the Centre of each *pīṭha* is portrayed as six-fold (*ṣaṭprakāra*) because there are six primary forms of the Goddess in each location. In the first *pīṭha*, Ādipīṭha, these six aspects are: Uḍḍāmbā, Raktā, Kālī, Karālinī, Kālasaṁkarṣiṇī and Kubjikā. It is interesting to note that here Kubjikā is understood as an **aspect of Parā** and that Kālī is such along with her. In this way the close connection between these goddesses, and hence with the traditions of which they are the primary deities, are brought into close juxtaposition.

The eight *pīṭhas* are:

1) Ādipīṭha; 2) Jālandhara; 3) Pūrṇa; 4) Kāmarūpa; 5) The Union of Three — Tisra; 6) The Moon — Candra; 7) The Sound — Nāda; 8) The Unmanifest — Avyakta.

They each contain six groups of eight (*aṣṭaka*) called:

1) Bhairava; 2) Yoginī; 3) Vīra; 4) Dūtī; 5) Kṣetra; 6) Ceṣṭa.

In the centre of this goddess, who is the Yoni, is the same goddess as the Liṅga that makes her blissful. It is the "Crooked Liṅga" (*vakrāliṅga*), the Liṅga of the goddess Vakrā, the Crooked goddess, i.e. the energy Kuṇḍalinī symbolized by a triangle "facing downward". From this Liṅga "churned from above", as the texts tell us, flows out the creation of the goddess into the spheres of her psychocosmic *maṇḍala*. Its primary form is the energy of empowerment (*ājñā*) which is the Drop (*bindu*) of white, lunar sperm that also flows through the Transmission.[18] In this scheme the goddess forms an internal conjunctio with herself. Self-stimulation and the self-regeneration of bliss is symbolized by the image of the goddess found in the *Parātantra* as licking her own Yoni to drink its vitalizing juices.

The remaining elements are:

1) The Tree (*Vṛkṣa*); 2) The Root (*kanda*); 3) The Tendril (*vallī*); 4) The Creeper (*latā*); 5) The Cave (*guhā*); 6) Yakṣiṇī; 7) Mahābalā; 8) The Secret Language (*chomakā*); 9) The Gesture (*mudrā*); 10) The Pledge (*samaya*); 11) The Seed (*bīja*); 12) Speech (*bhāṣā*); 13) Vaṭuka; 14) The Servant (*kimkara*); 15) The Cremation Ground (*śmaśāna*); 16) The Hermitage (*maṭha*).

It is interesting to note that the names of the female attendents (*dūtī*) in Kāmarūpa largely coincide with those found in Śrīcakra. These are the names of the arrows of the god Kāmadeva. Also worth noting is that the Yakṣinī in one of these pīṭha's is called Khañjinī. The cathonic connection and that with the vegetal world and the Goddess is here quite evident. Her power, as usual, is understood as flowing through the transmission of her teachings. These conduits of power are here represented as living. They are trees, creepers, roots and vines which, with the other elements, form a part of the sacred geography of the Yoni and its inhabitants (MBT (YKh) 14/13ff).

[18] Doniger quotes the following passage to show how the more common concept of the male androgynous Liṅga appears in contemporary South India in a modified form:

"The civalinkam or the phallus is a male form, but the substance within it, which is liquid (semen) or light (the deity), which is its action, is cakti, female ... the sign of maleness is really the locus of female qualities in a man, the male womb [that yields a] milky, generative substance" (Egnor 1978, p. 69 in *Sexual Metaphors and Animal Symbols in Indian Mythology* by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1981, p. 318).

She goes on to comment:

All three schemes, not only the last, in their own way attempt to represent a Mobius strip-like system that perpetually reverts back into and out of itself. To reinforce this process theory of reality and its immediate ritual and soteriological application, the entire system itself emerges from a pre-cosmic absolute and reverts back to it. This absolute is both a neuter transcendent (beyond the opposites) and the sexuated neutrality of the conjunction of opposites which is the dynamic condition of their interrelation that characterizes immanence. The 'Neuter' (*napumṣakam*) is an androgynous absolute generated by the hierogamy of Śiva and Śakti. It is the One understood as the supreme conjunctio from which all the phenomenal order is generated. This takes places in stages, the first of which is desire, just as it was the last to be absorbed into it. The passionate desire of the primordial couple, male and female, engulfs and consummes into itself all other things. When only that remains beside the Two, it is finally absorbed into the ecstasy (*ānanda*) of their conjunctio. The fullness of their passion manifests, as Abhinava puts it, in the fullness of their union.[19] But although union brings perfect satisfaction it does not extinguish desire. It is not the end but a new beginning. Pure transcendence can only be a metaphorical possibility in any scheme of reality. It necessarily lies outside it. It is total extinction, the end of all endings. The transcendent IS because it is not, never has been, nor ever will be, touched by becoming. The conjunctio IS a conjunctio because it is taking place NOW. It is perpetually renewed. It IS because it OCCURS, not just because it exists. And so Desire arises ever and anew. It is the energy of the conjunctio, Kaulinī who is the Mother of Insight (*darśana*), the Supreme Goddess, the Female Eunoch (*napumṣakā*) whose form is the 'sprout' of the clitoris.[20]

"In the context of Indian ideas about self-contained fluids, the liṅga in the yoni may be regarded as a male image in another way; it may symbolize the fantasy of protecting the phallus by taking it inside the body — the male's body — a narcissistic fantasy of self-sufficiency (Kakar 1978, pp 159-9). This would be an inversion of the myth in which the full body of the god Śiva emerges from inside the liṅga." (Ibid. p. 318)

The Liṅga in this case is clearly within the goddess.

[19] TĀ 3/170.

[20] MBT (YKh), 4/179.

It is certainly true, as Doniger points out, that "male androgynes by far outnumber female androgynes and are generally regarded as positive, while the female androgynes ... are generally negative".[21] Moreover, "the female androgyne is not only barren but dangerous: she is a woman with a phallus, the erotic mare in the 'wrong' species, who threatens the seducing man with opposition".[22] Even so, this does not entirely apply to Kubjikā who is a rare example of an Indian androgynous goddess. Although she is not represented as such in her iconography, her more 'essential' identity as ambivalent Yoni shares masculine traits along with its obviously feminine ones. Even though she is a feminine androgynous being, she is predominantly positive and, in this case, is not infertile. She does however have a dark, consumming side which is represented by Kālī with whom she is regularly identified.[23] Her association with the lower spheres of existence is connected to her igneous identity. She is the devouring consumming mother as the Fire of the Aeons (*samvartā*) that burns in the centre of her sacred Circle — *saṁvartāmaṇḍala*, the 'Divine Linga'. There, in the Centre, she is Rudra's energy which is "beautifully terrifying" (*subhīṣaṇī*). It is this aspect which identifies her most closely with Kālī.

But even though she, like Kālī, consummes the worlds into the Void of her Yoni, the Triangle of the energies of will, knowledge and action, Kubjikā is largely a benign androgyne despite her femininity. This is because the tension between the opposites is released within her through the blissful flux of emission. Her mad passion to consume everything into herself — the cosmic womb — has been satisfied. She is blissful with the Liṅga pouring out its energizing seed within her. Filling her, that is, with that same energy of bliss that is her own dynamic nature. As Alan Watts remarks, the Tantric androgyne symbolizes a state "in which the erotic no longer has to be sought or pursued, because it is always present in its totality." [24]

[21] Doniger 1981, p. 284.

[22] Ibid., p. 288.

[23] For example, see above p. 2.

[24] 'Patterns of Myth' Vol. 3, *The Two Hands of God: The Myths of Polarity* by Alan W. Watts, New York 1963, p. 204-5.

With this androgyne, there is no association with fears of loss of power and virility.[25] On the contrary, from the Yoni vitality is gained, drunk as from the Fountain of Life. The Yoni with its Triadic associations of the solar, lunar and igneous energies that are located in the corners and fuse in the Centre are energized by it. Transposing in abstracted terms the natural symbols exploited so extensively in the earlier Vedic tradition, the Sun as a universal Tantric symbol applied in this specific context combines within itself all the positive forces that make for fertility and power. The Moon drips its nectar as the secretion of the Yoni that "oozes bliss" and the Fire burns to accept that offering to strengthen the deities and the body of the Perfected Yogi (*siddha*) that contains them.

Tantric symbols and rituals as often happens, although drawn from the outer world of nature, symbolize inner states. Kubjikā is first and foremost Kuṇḍalinī. It is in fact in these Tantras that the symbolism of Kuṇḍalinī and the stations of her rise and descent was first elaborated in its most commonly known form. These centres are themselves Yonis of energy in the centre of which the Goddess of the Centre (*madhyadevī*) resides. And by the logic of reversals that characterize microcosms according to which the container is the contained and vice versa, they all form a part of the sacred geography of the Yoni. This is the body of the goddess and, by extension, that of the initiate, energized by the mantras that are the "waves of the Ocean of the Yoni".[26] Thus when she rises within the yogi, she rises within

[25] Cf. Doniger, op. cit., p. 308.

[26] There are two principle Yonis, an upper and a lower. The latter is called the 'Circle of Birth' (*janmacakra*). In the centre of this Circle is another one called the 'Circle of the Drop' (*bindumaṇḍala*). In the centre of this resides the mantric energy of the goddess as Parā Vidyā (the seed-syllable 'AIṂ'). This is Rudraśakti, the brilliant energy (*tejas*) of the Drop. Her form is like that of a bright flame (*śikhā*) that burns fiercely on the wick of the lamp of consciousness. Aroused by the force of the exhaled breath, it burns upward in the form of the subtle resonance (*nāda*) of blissful consciousness into the higher spheres of existence, consumming the dross of the Karma of the lower spheres. It is progressively led upward by the current of the channel which runs along the axis of the subtle body (i.e. *suṣumnā*). After it has passed through various stages, it wains away in the Drop in the centre of the Triangle of Meru at the top of its passage. This process is energized by the energy of the Moon God-

herself and the hierogomany that results at the climax of her flow is completely internalized. The male Liṅga is so fused with the female Liṅga that the first is experienced as an inner extension of the second within the Yoni. The yogi must return to the primordial emptiness of the Yoni. Not him, for the Self resides there in any case. The physical world, body, sensations, the play of the qualities, the vital consituents of the body all, in short, that has been previously labelled and energized with mantra as part of the constitution of reality, the spheres of energy — all this must dissolve away into the primal androgynous being.

dess Kubjikā who resides in the centre of the Yoni in her aspect as the energy of the New Moon (*amākalā*). This is the Sequence of Withdrawal (*saṁhārakrama*). It is completed by the Sequence of Emission (*sṛṣṭikrama*) which follows. In this sequence also, the energy of the goddess is drawn out of the Drop but this time the one which is in the centre of the upper Yoni. From here the goddess shines as the Full Moon from which she rains down her energy in the form of vitalizing seminal fluid (*retas*). This fills and energizes the lower centres up to the genitals. Just as the previous phase was that of the New Moon (*amākrama*) this is that of the Full Moon (*pūrṇimākrama*). In this way the goddess, identified with the bliss of universal consciousness is said to melt (*dravate*). The upper Yoni, in other words, flows with sexual fluid (MBT (KuKh) 13/110-143). The conjuction of the two Yonis is called Yonimudrā.

Important to note is that although one can distinguish two Yonis, there is in fact only one. The text stresses that this 'arising' and 'falling away' takes place from and into the Drop in the centre of the Yoni (ibid. 13/128cd). They are connected by the currents of the two breaths, ascending and descending. In the centre of both Yonis resides the goddess, just as she resides in the centre of every matrix of energy in the micro-/macro-cosm. In Her essential metaphysical identity she is described as the Energy of Consciousness (*citkalā*). She is the 'Spark of Consciousness (*citkākiṇī*) that illumines and activates the otherwise insentient activity of the three 'strands' of Nature (*prakṛti*). She is activated by the conjunction of the two Yonis, this union — yoga — stimulates her flow out of the matrix of energy constituted symbolically by the phonemes of the alphabet. The seed pours out flaming upwards (i.e. inwards). In its aroused condition it is the consumming energy of Desire (*icchā*) 'burnt by Passion' (*kāmadagdhā*). The culmination marks the release of Seed (*retas*) that flows down (out) to the Drop of origin. In this way Karma is destroyed and the 'living being' (*jīva*) is penetrated by Energy.

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The Cult of the Goddess Kubjikā

A Preliminary Comparative Textual and Anthropological Survey of a Secret Newar Kaula Goddess

This essay is about the goddess Kubjikā. The cult of this obscure goddess[1] will be compared with that of the much better known goddess Kālī, and references will occasionally be made to the goddess Tripurā. The latter, like Kubjikā, figures prominently right from the start of her history in the Śākta Kaula Tantras;[2] the former emerges initially in the Bhairava Tantras [3] and as a member of the Kaula pantheon. For those interested in Nepalese studies, an important common feature of these three goddesses and their ectypes is the central position they have held for several centuries in the esoteric Tantrism

[1] See Dyczkowski 1987a: 95ff. for a summary of the work published up to that time on this goddess. Since then more work has been published. See the bibliography.

[2] I refer here to the Kaula Tantras as Śākta, not in a technical, but a descriptive sense. Śākta as a technical term denoting those cults, scriptures, or people associated with the worship of the goddess as Śakti (meaning literally 'power') is absent from the terminology of the Tantras prior to the eleventh century. Instead we find the term *Kula* and its cognate *Kaula*.

According to Abhinavagupta (PTv pp. 32f; see Pandey 1963: 594f.), the term *Kula* is derived from the root *kul* which means 'coming together as a group'. Thus, in a non-technical sense, the word *kula* means 'family'. A wide range of symbolic meanings that refer to metaphysical and yogic concepts are found in this term by Tantric exegetes. Amongst the Newars the non-technical sense is never forgotten. *Kula* is not just the divine family, that is, the aggregate of the god's energies gathered together in the figure of his Tantric consort. It is also the human family of the goddess's disciples who, amongst the Newars, are also literally related.

[3] Concerning the Bhairava Tantras, see Dyczkowski 1987a: 42ff., also below.

of high-caste Hindu Newars as their lineage (*kula*) deities. Thus the aim of this essay is twofold. One is to present a general overview of some salient features of the typology of these forms of the sacred. The other is to present a brief introduction to Newar Śāktism as the context in which the goddess Kubjikā has been worshipped for most of her history.

One of the most basic features of the complex and multi-layered religion of the Newars is the thoroughness with which it has been permeated with Tantrism. This is true of both Newar Buddhism and Hinduism. In what follows I will deal exclusively with the latter. In Nepal, as elsewhere, Hinduism displays a remarkable capacity to preserve and maintain older forms of religion alongside the newer, giving each its place in the economy of the expanded whole. Thus, for example, the present Gorkhali kings, like the Malla kings before them, are still considered to be incarnations of Viṣṇu, and Śiva Paśupati remains, as he has been for centuries, the patron god of Nepal. These gods along with the ubiquitous Bhairava, Śiva's wrathful form, and the goddess Durgā, otherwise known as Bhagavatī, and the eight Mother goddesses (*mātṛkā*) who are arranged in protective circles around the Kathmandu Valley and its major cities, the many Gaṇeśas who protect the quarters of Newar towns, villages and countryside are the basic constituents of the Newars' public religion. They are the gods of the 'outside' public domain, what Levy has aptly called the 'civic space' or 'mesocosm'. Easily accessible to researchers, they have been the object of a great deal of study. But there is another 'inner' secret domain that is the Newars' 'microcosm'. This does not form a part of the sacred geography of the Newar civitas, although, from the initiates' point of view, it is the source and reason of much of it. The deities that populate this 'inner space' and their rites are closely guarded secrets and, often, they are the secret identity of the public deities, known only to initiates.

The two domains complement each other. The outer is dominantly male. It is the domain of the attendants and protectors of both the civic space and the inner expanse, which is dominantly female. By this I mean that while the deities in the public domain may be both male and female, the male dominates the female, while the secret lineage deities of the higher castes are invariably female accom-

panied by male consorts. The interplay of these two polarities generates the complex structures of Newar religion. Again, this, the inner domain is layered and graded in hierarchies of deepening and more elevated esoterism that ranges from the individual to his family group, clan, caste, and out through the complex interrelationships that make up Newar society. Thus the interplay between the inner and outer domains is maintained both by the secrecy in which it is grounded and one of the most characteristic features of Newar Tantrism as a whole, namely, its close relationship to the Newar caste system.[4]

It is commonly accepted by Tantrics everywhere that the teachings of the Tantras should be kept secret, although in actual practice the degree to which secrecy is maintained varies and the Newars are amongst the most orthodox in this respect. But this other feature of Newar Tantrism is in striking contrast to the precepts of the Tantras, especially the Kaula Tantras that tirelessly admonish equality.[5] The

[4] Quigley confirms that one of the aspects of Newar society on which everyone is more or less agreed is that "caste divisions are underscored, as are all aspects of Newar social life, by pervasive ritual. While certain rituals bring togther all the inhabitants of a particular settlement, many others are primarily oriented to an individual or a particular kinship group — a household, for example, or a group of affines, or perhaps a lineage." (Gellner and Quigley 1995: 300). Especially important amongst the 'many others' for the higher castes are Tantric rituals.

[5] It is worth stressing that although the Tantras enjoin that when initiates sit together to perform their Tantric rites there should be no caste distinctions, they become operant once more when the ritual ends. The two domains, the 'inner' Tantric and the 'outer' *Smārta*, are treated independently. Thus, for example, once the aspirant has received initiation in the Tantric cult of Svacchandabhairava, which is an important part of Newar esoterism, as it was of Kashmiri, the *Svacchandabhairavatantra* prescribes expiation for anyone who even mentions prior caste: *prāgjātyudiraṇād devi prayaścittī bhaven naraḥ* | (SvT 4/544b; cf. ibid. 4/414. Abhinavagupta enjoins the same for Trika Śaivites in TĀ 15/576). Further on, however, the Tantra enjoins that 'one should not criticize the *Smārta* religion which teaches the path of right conduct'. *smārtaṁ dharmaṁ na nindet tu ācārapathadarśakam* (ibid. 5/45; see Arraj 1988: 29 - 30 fn. 2. Note, however, that at the same time strict distinctions were maintained between initiates of different Tantric traditions (see Dyczkowski 1987a: 166 fn. 34).

qualifications required of an aspirant are not those of birth but purity of conduct. Accordingly, the Tantras devote long sections to listing the qualities required of the disciple and those of the teacher. The teacher must examine the disciple to see if he is devoted to the teacher and the deity. Like the teacher, he must be a moral person and not deceitful. Caste status is never a consideration. Indeed, those of low caste are believed to have a special power by virtue of their low status — thus reversing the common view that those of high caste, especially Brahmins, possess it. The Newars are well aware of this principle, which is well exemplified by the many well-known stories of the life and exploits of the Brahmin Gayapati, better known as Gayaḥbājyā, who was instructed in the use of mantras by an outcaste (*poḍe*).[6]

In this aspect, as in many others, Tantric ritual is analogous to its Vedic predecessor. Thus Heesterman points out that after the conclusion of the Vedic sacrifice "about to leave the ritual enclosure, the sacrificer, whether king or commoner, returns to his normal, unchanged self in society: 'Here I am just as I am', as he has to declare in his concluding mantra (ŚB 1/1/1/6; 1/9/3/23). Nothing has changed."

[6] Gayaḥbājyā was almost certainly a historical figure. He was a Brahmin who lived in Sulimhā, in the western part of the core area of Patan, in the sixteenth century. There are many stories of the miracles he performed by the powers he acquired with the help of an outcaste (*poḍe*). I am grateful to Nūtan Śarmā for giving me a copy of an unpublished paper called 'The Story of Gayaḥbājyā' in which he collects some of these stories and data establishing the historicity of Gayaḥbājyā. The following is a brief summary of one of the most famous of them (see N. Sharma 1991: 1ff. and 1993: 46ff.).

The pious Gayaḥbājyā used to go daily for his morning ablutions to Mṛtyuñjaya Ghāṭ ('Riverbank of the Conqueror of Death') at the confluence of the rivers Vāgmatī and Manoharā. One day, on his way to the river, it began to rain very heavily. He took shelter under the roofing overhanging the nearest house, which happened to belong to an untouchable who was famous in Patan as a powerful Tantric. Inside the house a child was crying. The mother who had tried in every way to calm it, and became exasperated, laid hold of a knife and stabbed it to death. Soon afterwards, the father came home and seeing what had happened consoled his wife and, taking the child into another room, brought it back to life. Astonished by what he had seen, Gayaḥbājyā took to standing outside the untouchable's house for a while every day when he passed to take his bath. Although he was very curious, Gayaḥbājyā was conscious of his status as a Brahmin and so would never ask

But this is the exception that proves the rule. In actual fact, Newars cannot choose their Tantric guru. Nor are they all allowed to have one. The rule is so rigidly applied that the nineteenth-century chronicle, the *Bhāṣāvaṁśāvali*, meticulously lists the names of the castes whose members can 'receive mantra' and those who can give it.[7] Significantly, these prescriptions are attributed to Sthitimalla, the fourteenth-century king who was famous for having established the caste structure of Newar society. In actual fact, his contribution was more probably a reform and extension of a pre-existing caste system, which we know from references in much earlier inscriptions, predated him.[8] But while some credence may be given to Sthitimalla's legislation of the caste system, we are not yet in a position to say to

to be admitted. Then one day the outcaste asked him why he came daily to stand outside his house. Gayaḥbājyā took the opportunity to ask the outcaste to reveal his Tantric secrets. The outcaste agreed and told him to come after four days with a bunch of wood apple leaves (*belpatra*), which Gayaḥbājyā did. Then they went together to the riverbank where the Brahmin bathed daily. The outcaste then told him to bathe. When Gayaḥbājyā had finished, the outcaste, squatting on a platform where ancestral offerings (*śrāddha*) are made, wrote mantras on the wood apple leaves and threw them into the river, telling Gayaḥbājyā to eat them. When he had done so, he was astonished to discover that he knew all the mantras. However, he had not acquired their power (*siddhi*). Instructed by the outcaste, Gayaḥbājyā began to worship Bhuṇḍe Gaṇeśa in order to empower the mantras he had received. After some days, Gaṇeśa appeared to him and told him to go to the shrine of Bālkumārī on the night of the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight (*pācahre*) in March when the Ḍākinī witches gather to prepare magic collyrium (*mohanī*). This collyrium, Gaṇeśa told him, would give him the powers he sought. Eventually, Gayaḥbājyā managed to acquire the collyrium and, smearing it on his forehead he attained the power (*siddhi*) he sought and became a great Tantric.

[7] See *Bhāṣāvaṁśāvali* pp. 156ff.

[8] Slusser writes: "The Indian caste system was in effect in the Nepal Valley from at least the beginning of the Licchavi Period [i.e. the fourth century], as inscriptions attest. Similarly, the complex system of subcastes that ordain Valley social behaviour must be viewed as the product of centuries of gradual accretion, not a sudden imposition of law. [...] Nonetheless, Sthitimalla may well have codified the particular social patterns that had developed by his time, and thus given local custom the force of law." (Slusser 1982: 59)

what degree, if any, he contributed to the formal ordering of esoteric Tantrism. Even so, we can say with confidence that the system, carefully graded and regulated by caste considerations, was well in place when the *Bhāṣāvaṁśāvali* was written and in all probability for a number of centuries prior to that.

One of the reasons for this phenomenon is certainly the powerful influence Brahmins have had on the formation of the Newar, essentially Hindu, state through their influential patrons (*yajamāna*), especially the Newar kings and their officials. It is hard to resist this view when we observe that the system is constructed in such a way that when it is functioning in ideal circumstances, at least from the Newar Brahmin's point of view, the Newar Brahmins are the sole dispensers of the vital initiation that allows access to it. The situation, then, is analogous to the monopoly Brahmins have striven to achieve throughout their history everywhere in South Asia, and wherever there are Hindus, as family priests (*purohita*) for the higher 'twice-born' castes. In this capacity they perform the *smārta* rites of passage (*saṁskāra*) that mark a Hindu's progress through life from conception to death. In the case of the higher Newar castes who are entitled to receive it, the family Brahmin *purohita* or another Newar Brahmin, whose traditional office it is to do so, may give Tantric initiation to those members of the family who have passed through all the rites of passage preceding marriage and desire it. Thus a Newar Brahmin may be both *purohita* and Tantric guru.[9]

Even so, the two priestly functions are always clearly distinguished. This is evidenced by the fact that they may be performed by two different Brahmins. But even in those cases, each extended Newar family lineage (*phuki*)[10] of all but the lowest castes is traditionally

[9] For a general account of these two aspects of the Newar Brahmin's function, see Toffin 1989.

[10] Ishii provides a basic definition of the term *phuki*. He says that this term is "used principally among males who have a close patrilineal relation to each other but reside in different households ... in a broad sense, all the members of the residential family of a person who is referred to as *phuki* can be called *phuki* as well." (Ishii 1987: 338 fn. 7) By 'residential family' Ishii means the household in which the members share the same kitchen. For a detailed discussion see Ishii 1995: 141-146.

associated with a specific Brahmin family who performs these functions. The initiation given to members of the higher castes, that is, the ones eligible to receive the sacred thread, is into the worship of one of the goddesses belonging to six Kula lineages (*āmnāya*) amongst which Kubjikā, forms of Kālī and Tripurā are the most important. She is the 'chosen deity' (*iṣṭadevatā*)[11] and lineage goddess (*kuladevatā, āmnāyadevatā*) of the aspirant's extended family lineage (*phuki*).

While certain Brahmins can give initiation to people who do not belong to their lineages, there is a second group of people who are empowered to dispense Tantric initiation only to their own family members. These are the Brahmin's assistants the Jośīs (astrologers) and Ācājus (both Kshatriya castes). The latter are also called Karmācāryas, which is an appellation derived from the Sanskrit name for a Kaula teacher, namely, Kramācārya. D. R. Regmi (1965-1966, vol. 2, p. 715, quoted in Levy 1991: 356) defines their function as follows: "These Ācājus functioned as inferior priests in all Brahman led households. They accepted *dakṣiṇā* (gifts in money) as well as food in their host's house.... But they could not chant the Vedic mantras and also could not conduct the [Vedic] rituals. These were done by Brahmans alone. The Ācājus and Jośīs, however, were indispensable for any [complex] ritual.

[11] In India the 'chosen deity' a person may have is literally that, a particular god or goddess to whom that individual feels especially attracted. Coincidentally, this deity may well be one that has been worshipped in his or her family. Indian kings regularly have such family deities. The Newar kings had several chosen deities. The Licchavis (fourth to ninth century) had Paśupati and Viṣṇu and a goddess called Māneśvarī. The worship of Māneśvarī was maintained by the Malla kings. Raṇajitmalla (ruled 1722-1769 A.D.), for example, refers to her in his inscription on the side of the gate to his Bhaktapur palace as his 'chosen deity'. (In this inscription the king refers to himself as *śrīmatpaśupaticaraṇakamaladhūlidhūsaritaśiroruhaśrīmanmāneśvarīṣṭadevatāvaralabdha-*. See A.D. Sharma 1954 for a detailed notice of this inscription.) From the time of Sthitimalla the Mallas also adopted the goddess Taleju. She was their lineage goddess. However, this did not prevent them from having other 'outer' chosen deities. Siddhinarasiṁhamalla (1597-1619 A.D.) of Patan, for example, chose Kṛṣṇa for himself. His son, Śrīnivāsamalla, chose Matysendranātha who was, and still is, the 'chosen deity' of the city of Patan. Again, to close the circle as it were, the chosen deity of Matsyendranātha is Siddhilakṣmī, the goddess Taleju (see below).

The Jośī was concerned with the task of finding out an auspicious time for any kind of rite performed. The Ācāju helped to arrange methodically the requirements of the ritual performance. He prepared the groundwork for the actual rite. It was left for the Brahman priest to use them."

The Jośī's functions may be much more complex than those described here. Indeed, nowadays the Jośīs who belong to families traditionally linked to the worship of Taleju, the Malla kings' lineage deity, have many rituals to perform in the Taleju temples of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. In Kathmandu, the Taleju Brahmin who worships in the Malla kings' private chapel (*āgañ*) is assisted by a Jośī, not a Karmācārya, although Karmācāryas do assist in the more lengthy occasional rites.[12] In Bhaktapur, where both Jośīs and Karmācāryas have ritual functions in the Taleju temple (*āgañ*) of the Malla royal palace, the Jośīs have more to do than the Karmācāryas. This is certainly not the way it was in the past. This is clear from the fact that Karmācāryas in general have much more extensive priestly functions than do Jośīs. Thus in Bhaktapur, for example, where Karmācāryas have, as elsewhere, numerous patrons (*yajamāna*) for whom they perform Tantric rituals, the Jośīs do not have any.

This is the case even though Jośīs are generally considered to have a higher caste status than Karmācāryas. The latter are of varying status in different places. In Bhaktapur, where the status of such auxiliary priests in general is considered to be lower than in the other cities, there are also Ācājus belonging to the farmer (*jyāpu*) castes. Their function, which they share with other Karmācāryas, is to worship the mother goddesses (*mātṛkā*) who encircle and protect the city.

[12] The degree in which this relationship has been politicized is well illustrated by the reversal of roles that takes place in the Taleju temple (not to be confused with the *āgañ*) of the Kathmandu Malla royal palace. There, the main daily officiant is a Karmācārya who is, apparently, assisted by a Newar Brahmin. The latter cooks the mixture of rice and pulse that is the deity's daily food offering (*bhoga*) because, in order to avoid pollution, a Brahmin must do this. Thus, although Karmācāryas have managed to take over almost all of the ritual functions in this temple and so pocket the money offering and take home most of the remains of the many food offerings financed by the Nepalese government, they could not eliminate the Brahmin, who was originally their boss, altogether. But in this case, paradoxically, as he is the most senior because of his ritual purity, he has been reduced to the status of a cook.

Thus we find that there is a hierarchy of ritual agents of varying status graded amongst the Newars according to their caste and ritual functions. A cardinal feature of the situation as it is at present is the fact that Karmācāryas do not receive initiation from Brahmins. The latter do, however, continue to act as their *purohita*s and perform their *Smārta* life cycle rituals for them. There are reasons to believe, however, that they did originally take initiation from them. Karmācāryas assert, especially the ones of higher status, that they can compile liturgies when required, and probably have done so. But although there are many amongst them who assert that because they can do this they are not dependant on Brahmins, it is they, nonetheless, who go to consult Brahmins when in doubt concerning ritual procedure, not the other way around. Moreover, their roles are always those of assistants, and they cannot give initiation to people outside their lineage. This is the case with Jośīs also. The Bhaktapur Jośīs believe that they were originally Brahmins and that this is the reason why they can initiate their own lineage members. Even so, in both cases Brahmins perform ritual functions for them that they cannot do alone. The most revealing of these from this point of view is the necessary presence of Brahmins at certain crucial junctures in the thirteen days required for the death rites (*antyeṣṭi*). Although I have not as yet examined the liturgies in question, I have been reliably informed by a Rājopādhyāya of Bhaktapur that on one of these occasions, if the deceased Karmācārya was an initiate, a rite is performed aimed at returning the mantra to the deity and the guru from whom it was received. Even though the deceased Karmācārya received initiation from a senior family member, on this crucial occasion it is a Brahmin who acts as the guru, thus revealing the identity of the original point of entry of the Karmācārya's lineage to its ritual status.

Smārta Hinduism, at least that part of it concerned with the rites of passage, distinguishes, in some respects, very clearly between the priest, who can perform rituals, and the layman who cannot perform them himself and so must employ a priest for this purpose. But even in that case a great deal of ritual activity in a *smārta* rite is undertaken by the priest's patron (*yajamāna*), although he does so as directed by the priest, not independently. He can do this because he is empowered by an initiatory purification at the beginning of the rite, analogous to the Vedic initiation (*dīkṣā*) which formed a part of the

preliminaries of each sacrifice (*yajña*). By thus bestowing on his patron (*yajamāna*) the right to share in his priestly functions, the Brahmin attempted to free himself of the danger of taking his patron's impurites onto himself. Summarizing Heesterman's view on the classical Vedic sacrifice, Quigley (1993: 59) explains:

"In the classical ritual, the patron (*yajamāna*) has already been purified. Acutely aware of the dangers inherent in accepting a patron's gifts and thereby his impurity, the 'brahmin' has made his sacrificial services 'superfluous' (Heesterman 1985: 39). Or, put another way, the patron has become his own priest with the result that death and impurity no longer circulate between the parties."

But while Newar Brahmins are aware that ritual action may defile their classical Brahminical identity, their ranking of status [13] is only partially based on considerations of relative purity. This is because, in the context of Tantric ritual, these considerations are temporarily suspended, to be replaced by the ordinances of a different ritual universe.[14] The corollary to this is that, in the context of Tantric

[13] Quigley pertinently points out that there is a gulf between the theory that Brahmins stand supreme in the caste hierarchy and practice where their status is, for various reasons, subordinated to that of their patrons. Quigley refers to this theory as a "colonial interpretation of caste" (Quigley 1993: 84) with which modern scholars often concur. But "why", he asks, "should they claim that the Brāhmaṇ stands supreme when, time after time, his status is shown to be intensely ambivalent, at worst vilely degrading?" (ibid.) Quigley writes that the main reason for the "near unanimous defence of the Brāhmaṇ's supremacy lies in the fact that authorities on Hinduism have, more often than not, illegitimately fused two very different concepts — *jāti* and *varṇa* — or caste (Brāhmaṇ) and [priestly] function (*brāhmaṇ*). Here they have indeed made the same mistake as colonial administrators." We should not forget, however, that the foremost of these authorities are the Brahmins themselves! Moreover, it is not only scholars and colonials who have been misled by these authorities but virtually all Hindus, even though many will agree that Brahmins can be, and very often are, degraded by impurity. The contrast between Brahminical theory and actual practice is the basis of the energizing tension and dynamism that characterises every Hindu society.

[14] This procedure is well exemplified by the formulations of Śrīvidyā initiates in Bhāskararāya's tradition in Benares. Brahmins may drink the ritual offerings of wine without defilement because, according to them, as caste considerations are suspended for the duration of the rite, they are not, at that time, Brahmins.

ritual, the contact with sources of defilement (including his patron's impurities) no longer serves to depress in the same degree the status of a Brahmin or anyone who functions as a priest. Thus, even more so than in the non-Tantric context, the empowerment transmitted to the initiate from the deity through the guru and the rite of initiation enables him to begin his life as an independent ritual agent. He is, as far as the Tantric ritual to which he has gained access is concerned, his own priest and can act as a priest, for the members of his lineage at least. Thus Tantrism further blurs the distinction between priest and layman. The Tantric initiate is not like the baptised Catholic Christian layman, a passive and, at best, receptive, spectator of ritual action in which his function is hardly more than consent. Like priests of most religions, great and small, throughout the world he "has a special and sometimes secret knowledge of the techniques of worship including incantations, prayers, sacrificial acts, songs and other acts that are believed to bridge the separation between the divine or sacred and the profane realm."[15]

Tantrism in this respect reflects the diffusion of priestly functions throughout local communities in South Asia, including the Newar, where we see potters, barbers, washermen and others acting in priestly capacities on particular occasions, while in some cases, as happens with the Newars (see below), members or branches of families function as sacrificial priests for their cognate and affinal relatives (see Heesterman 1985: 152). Even so, Newar Kaula initiates cannot perform rituals for others outside their lineage unless they are Brahmins or (generally Kshatriya) Karmācāryas. The only other limitation on the common initiate's ritual activity is purely practical. He may not have the time or the knowledge to do more than perform the relatively short and simple daily obligatory rite (*nityapūjā*). For other rituals he may therefore call the Karmācārya or Brahmin who is traditionally related to his lineage. In case there are no initiates left in the lineage or they are old, disabled or have moved to distant places (and these contingencies have nowadays become common) even the daily obligatory rite may be performed by a Karmācārya.

[15] James 1974: 1,007 quoted by Levy 1992: 346. Again, the Tantric situation reflects the earlier Vedic one in which power and authority were subject to dispersal depending on the outcome of the sacrificial contest.

Thus initiates can be ranged along a graded hierarchy on the basis of the degree of independence they enjoy as ritual agents. At the top stands the Taleju Rājopādhyāya, who still acts as the Malla king's *purohita* and guru even though the Gorkhali Shahs have been ruling since 1769. He officiates at the innermost esoteric centre of the network of Hindu Newar esoterism — the Malla king's Tantric shrine where Taleju, his lineage goddess, is worshipped, as the liturgies say, for the benefit of the king, his country and his people.

Ideally — and in the past this was probably the case — the Taleju Brahmin is accepted by everybody as the sole head and foundation of the entire system. He is the ultimate guru of all the gurus. In a sense, he is not only the ultimate but the sole ritual agent. All initiates are his assistants. They act in his place through the extension of his empowering authority, transmitted to them through the initiation he administers. From this uncompromisingly autocratic point of view, all those who serve clients (*yajamāna*) with their priestly functions have been appointed to this task by the Rājopādhyāya. Their clients are really the clients of the Rājopādhyāya who has delegated this job to them. The Taleju Rājopādhyāya insists that he can do 'everything' and 'go everywhere'. Theoretically he has access to every secret place and can perform any ritual. In actual fact, however, at present at least, he cannot. There are numerous public temples — for example, the temple of Guhyeśvarī near Paśupati — where the sole officiants are Karmācāryas. Moreover, even if there are many Rājopādhyāya Brahmins who have their own traditional clients, even the seniormost Rājopādhyāya cannot enter a family's Tantric shrine (*āgañ*) if he is not specifically authorized to do so.

Even so, the Rājopādhyāya insists that the Karmācāryas' priestly functions are merely supplementary extensions of his own. He asserts that his ancestors created the range of Karmācāryas and the Jośīs to act as his assistants. This is because although he can perform every ritual action, including animal sacrifice and the consumption of liquor (*ali*, *sudhā*), he may choose not to do these things.[16] More-

[16] That this is the case is clearly proved by the fact that there are rituals that only Rājopādhyāyas can perform alone, the prime examples being those that require animal sacrifice that they must, therefore, do themselves even though they invariably prefer to have the actual killing done by an assistant whenever possible.

over, there are rituals or parts of rituals that only he can perform; and so he must attend to them. Amongst them are the rituals that are considered to be the most dangerous and powerful. These are the most 'internal'. They are the rites of Taleju who is worshipped in conjunction with her innermost energizing counterpart, the goddess Kubjikā, the lineage goddess of the Taleju Rājopādhyāyas and, in all probability, of all the other Rājopādhyāyas, Karmācāryas and Jośīs.

Of course, matters do not seem to be this way to others. As a result of what the Rājopādhyāya may call a mass rebellion, most of these other priests consider themselves to be autonomous agents. It is possible to meet a Karmācārya who bows his head respectfully as he says in a hushed voice that he is nothing but the servant of the Rājopādhyāya, but most are far from this fealty.[17] In Bhaktapur, the Karmācāryas who serve the upper castes (*thar*) affirm that they lived in Bhaktapur prior to the arrival of the Rājopādhyāyas, which took

[17] I am thinking in particular of an interview with a Karmācārya who, after performing the functions of the Karmācārya in the Taleju temple in Patan for many years, resigned. When asked if this was because of some quarrel with the Rājopādhyāya priests, he was surprised. "Why should we quarrel," he said, "they are our gurus and we are their assistants!" The reason he left was quite another. The government trust that finances the Taleju and other temples in the Valley gave him only one Nepalese rupee a day as remuneration. At present this is barely the price of a cup of tea. The tone and mood of this Karmācārya was in sharp contrast with that of the main Vidyāpīṭha Karmācārya who performs the equivalent rituals in the Bhaktapur Taleju temple. He is a senior science lecturer in Tribhuvan University and has several well-to-do patrons. Moreover, the situation in the Bhaktapur temple, although not good, is considerably better than in Patan, and so those who act as priests there are better rewarded. The Bhaktapur Karmācārya, who is in a much better financial position and, as a university lecturer, enjoys a better social status, combined with a self-assertive character, represents the kind of Karmācārya who is convinced of his own importance and resents the inferior status to which he is relegated by Rājopādhyāyas. He does not talk about his caste status. He prefers to talk about his competence as a ritual agent. He goes so far as to boast that he can perform the *smārta* life cycle rituals himself — which he is certainly not authorized to do. Clearly, competence to perform ritual is amongst the Newars a finely graded measure of status, no less than considerations of relative purity, which is the most basic measure of status in traditional Hindu societies.

place only hardly nine or ten generations ago, and that they were displaced by them from their original high status.[18] They point to the Tantric shrines (*āgañ*) where they, not Brahmins, perform rituals on behalf of the lineage members. Amongst them, they say, are the oldest ones. They are the gurus there, they say, because the Brahmins have not been able to displace them.

These disputes are clearly extensions of those that take place wherever society is ordered into castes, a social order that has been aptly characterised as a "contested hierarchy". In this case, the gradation of ritual empowerment is the defining characteristic of status.

[18] The Bhaktapur Karmācāryas accept the historicity of the story of Ullāsa and Allāsa Rāj. These were two Brahmin brothers who came to the Valley from Kanauj. Allāsa Rāj went to the hills where, it is said, his descendants became the hill (*pārvatīya*) Brahmins. Ullāsa Rāj came to Bhaktapur and his descendants are said to be the present Rājopādhyāya Brahmins of Bhaktapur (Levy 1992: 346ff.). Another version says that the two brothers pleased the king by their Vedic recitation and were asked to stay. One remained in Bhaktapur, and the other in Kathmandu. There are several other legends (for which see Toffin 1995: 188). Genealogies have been recovered that begin with Ullāsa Rāj (see Witzel 1976). Toffin writes:

"According to this document, this Kanaujīya priest arrived in the Nepal Valley in the middle of the sixteenth century and died in 1576. He is supposedly the earliest 'Nepalese' ancestor of the family. However, these dates have to be treated with caution because other interpretations of the genealogies are possible: the original ancestor could have migrated to Nepal in the fourteenth century, at roughly the same time as Taleju was brought to Bhaktapur, or at the end of the fifteenth century during the reign of Raya Malla (1482-1505 AD)." (Toffin 1995: 188)

The legends vary also for different cities, since 'Rājopādhyāya' was not originally a proper name but a title meaning the 'king's teacher', and it appears that several Brahmin families came at different times and settled in various places in the Valley. Toffin remarks:

"Nor does it seem that the present day Rājopādhyāyas are all descended from a single ancestor as legend claims. Rather it appears that the first arrivals, no more than several families, continued to receive reinforcements until quite a late date (at least until the sixteenth or seventeenth century). The present Rājopādhyāya caste is thus more likely to have been a product of the amalgamation of successive waves of migrants than of the fission and separation of the descendants of a single ancestor." (ibid. 191)

Accordingly, it is this that is the object of contention. The status associated with Tantric ritual empowerment is reflected in the distribution of priestly functions amongst the members of Newar family lineages. Thus, although every initiate is empowered to perform all the rituals associated with his own lineage diety, in practice, the seniormost member of the lineage — the *thakāli* (also called *nāyo*) and, to a lesser degree, his wife — the *nakin* — have special privileges and obligations along with other elders.[19]

Significantly, the *thakāli* and his wife must be present for at least the preliminary stages of the rites of Tantric initiation of members of their lineage. Traditionally it is the *thakāli* who performs the worship of the lineage deity in its aniconic form as a stone (see below). He must be present and often performs priestly functions in the major life cycle rites. In this he may complement the ritual activity of the family *purohita*. The *purohita* who, as we have said, must be a Brahmin, performs the Sanskrit rites. The *thakāli* may at times perform additional non-Sanskritic rites. A striking example of this is the *kaytāpūjā*. Amongst the upper castes this is done in conjunction with the *smārta* rite of passage in which a sacred thread is given to a young man as a sign of his entry into adulthood (*upanayana*). This part of the rite is basically the same as the one performed in India, while the other part of the rite is important enough to give its name to the whole ritual. Essentially, this consists of the donation of a loincloth — *kaytā* — to the young man as a token of his transformed status and full admission into his lineage as an adult. This is done not by the Brahmin, but by the *thakāli*.[20] Low castes (but not the lowest) who are not entitled to the *smārta* rite of passage retain the rites associated with the offering of the *kaytā*.

[19] This is generally true for all Newars, whether Hindu or Buddhist. Thus, the lineages of Buddhist farmer castes (*jyāpu, maharjan*) in Patan and Kathmandu have a group of five elders who lead their community (Gellner and Quigley 1995: 181 fn. 4).

[20] Gellner reports that amongst the Buddhist farmer castes (*maharjan*): "Once a Maharjan has been through the ritual of consecration of an elder (*thākuli* [= *thakāli*] *layegu*) in some circles he is considered able to act as a priest for such occasions as *kaytā pūjā* (loincloth worship), thus making it unnecessary to invite the Vajrācārya, domestic priest." (Gellner and Quigley 1995: 181 fn. 4)

I believe that these are examples of many remnants of Newar religious customs that pre-existed the introduction of religion from India. Numerous anthropologists and historians have noted in a large number of contexts a hard core of beliefs and ritual practice, both individual and collective, that cannot be reduced to those of scriptural Hinduism or Buddhism. This should not surprise us. Indeed, we perceive the existence of analogous cores throughout the Indian subcontinent and wherever these religions have spread. It is this core which gives these religions and the traditional, essentially religious societies to whose development they contribute, their particular regional and local character. Certainly there are major problems involved in identifying the exact content of this core in Newar religion and social life for the simple reason that Indian religions and social institutions have influenced the Newars for many centuries. Moreover, the subject is so extensive and controversial that it would require separate treatment. Even so, a few features of this core system of beliefs that are relevant to our topic need to be provisionally and succinctly tackled here, if we are to understand the specific character of Newar religion and, more specifically, the Tantrism of the higher castes which centres on the worship of the goddesses who are the subject of this essay.

To do this let us begin by returning to the figure of the *thakāli*. There are numerous circumstances in which the *thakāli* functions as the priest of the lineage of which he is the head. Amongst the lower castes he often operates in this capacity independently. In the case of the higher castes, his role as the lineage priest is eclipsed by the Sanskritic lineage priests, the guru, *purohita* and Karmācārya. Nonetheless the preeminent seniority he enjoys in his lineage is concretely apparent in his priestly functions. Particularly important from the point of view of this study is his role as the chief priest in the worship of a stone as the lineage deity, because Newar Śāktism is also centred on the worship of lineage (*kula*) deities.

The worship of these stones and, indeed the worship of stones as deities in general, is a characteristic feature of Newar religion, both Buddhist and Hindu. When the founder of a lineage enters to settle in an inhabited space, he places a stone at its confines, thus delineating the territory in which he and his descendants re-

side.[21] This stone, often together with others in a small group, is venerated at least once a year by his descendants as their lineage deity — *digu dyaḥ*. On the basis of the results of the surveys carried out so far, it transpires that the main deity worshipped in the stone by the lower castes, that is, those not entitled to receive Kaula initition, is male. Amongst the farmer (*jyāpu*) lineages in Bhaktapur we find, amongst others, Mahādeva and Nārāyaṇa. The potters worship Gaṇeśa; stone- and metal-workers (*śilpakār*), Viśvakarman; and the copper- and bronze-workers (*tamrakār*), Mahādeva. The stones are usually kept in a specific place to which lineage members go every year. The stones may be moved, or others selected elsewhere into which the deity is invoked.[22] In the course of the lengthy rite of ado-

[21] Vergati writes: "What seemed to me specific to the Newars both Buddhists and Hindus was the relation between the lineage deity and a particular territory. The divinity was situated obligatorily in the same area as that in which the ancestors and senior members of the lineage resided. Even if people are unable to explain in detail their genealogies they always know where their lineage deity is situated." (Vergati 1995: 18)

[22] A notable example of this in Bhaktapur was the shifting of the *digu* stone of the Taleju Rājopādhyāyas. The stone was kept in a small sacred grove called Sillighari, just outside Bhaktapur, where numerous lineage stones are kept. Although the worship of *digu* stones is not usually done in secret, the Rājopādhyayas do not wish to be observed when they perform these, or indeed, any rites. Accordingly, they built a wall around the area where the stone was located. But the bricks were repeatedly removed from the wall, making it hard for them to keep their rites secret. Thus they decided that they should move their stone. Accordingly, some forty years ago, all adult male Rājopādhyāyas of that lineage met around the stone. A ritual drawing of lots took place in order to ask the deity in the stone for its consent to move it. When the elders had decided on the basis of the outcome that this consent had been given, a new stone and companions were installed in the new location. And so now the new stone is located in a garden of the royal palace where the *digu* of the Malla kings is kept (see below).

The potential mobility of the deities in such stones is well illustrated by the unusual case of the *digu* deity of the Tamrakārs, the copper- and bronze-workers, of Bhaktapur. Although they always perform the rites of their *digu* deity at Hanumān Ghāṭ, they do not have the usual set of fixed *digu* stones. They must go to the river to collect fresh stones every time they worship their *digu*. They do this at random by simply closing their eyes and taking the first stones of an appropriate size they happen to touch. Eight stones are selected in this way. Seven of them represent guardians (*kṣetrapāla*), and the remaining one, the *digu*.

ration the present and, if the stone has been shifted, previous locations of the stone are mentioned and the year of its removal. Thus it is possible to find people who know of the stone's location even several hundreds of years back.

It is also possible to share the same stone with others. This is what happens in the Pūrṇacaṇḍī temple in Patan. This and one other temple, also located in Patan,[23] along with three others in Bhaktapur [24] are the only open public temples to the goddess Siddhilakṣmī in the Valley. Here she is represented by a large stone. Although the goddess of this temple is commonly known as Pūrṇacaṇḍī, there can be no doubt the deity in the shrine is Siddhilakṣmī, because the tympanum bears an image of this goddess. Moreover, there is a lengthy hymn dedicated to this goddess inscribed on a slab cemented onto one of the walls. The temple was built by the Rājopādhyāyas of the locality (Valā). The stone in the temple serves as the *digu dyaḥ* of a large number of families living in Patan, including all the lineages of Rājopādhyāyas in Patan.[25]

[23] The other temple is associated with the Kirantis of eastern Nepal, a people who are perhaps descendants of the Kirātas who appear in many Newar legends as the earliest known rulers of the Kathmandu Valley. Slusser informs us that "there are two sites in Patan where the Kiranti maintain traditional ties. One of these, the Siddhilakṣmī temple near Tyagal-tol, attracts certain Kiranti families for the annual worship of their clan god, the *Kuladevatā* (*degu, devālī*)" (Slusser 1982: 96). Although the local people do refer to the temple as one of Siddhilakṣmī, the icon is not at all that of this goddess. Moreover, no inscription found on or near the temple refers to the deity in it as being this goddess.

[24] The oldest temple in Bhaktapur dedicated to Siddhilakṣmī was built by Jagatprakāśamalla, who ruled between 1643 and 1672 A.D. This is located next to the Malla palace. His son, Jitāmitramalla, who ruled from 1673 to 1696 A.D., built another one next the one his father had built. The third was built by Bhūpatīndramalla (1696-1722 A.D.) in Ta:mārhī square. See plate 1.

[25] Up to recent times, there were six lineages of Rājopādhyāyas in Patan, collectively called the Six Families (*ṣaṭkula*). They are all connected with Pūrṇacaṇḍī. The six families are: 1) Balimā, Patukva and Gābahāl. These three belong to one family. They are descendants of three brothers who took up residence in these three places in Patan; 2) Sulimā; 3) Valā, also called Valānimā; 4) Svatha. Their Tantric shrine (*āgaṅ*) is in the Mucheṅ quarter of Patan; 5) Tāḥraṁlivi; 6) Nugaḥ. This lineage came to an end three or four generations ago.

The story concerning the founding of this temple is still transmitted in the Valānimā lineage of Rājopādhyāyas, who are relatives of the present Taleju priests.[26] The hero of this story is Viśvanātha, the son of Gayaḥbājyā (see above fn. 6). He was the *purohita* and Tantric preceptor of King Siddhinarasiṁhamalla, who ruled Patan from 1597 to 1619. Viśvanātha, the story goes, found the goddess in the form of a stone in the Nakhu river, which in those days flowed next to the present location of the temple. The nearby pond is said to be a remnant of this river. Viśvanātha and a certain Pūrṇānanda Svāmī, who is said to have come from Bengal, erected this temple with the help of the Malla king and other patrons. All the Rājopādhyāyas of Patan go to this temple and perform *digupūjā* in conjunction with their *smārta* rites of passage, especially when their sons are given the sacred thread (*vratabandha*) and when they marry. They do not worship their *digu* otherwise.

Large numbers of people, including many from Kathmandu whose ancestors lived in Patan, come to this temple during the season in which the *digu* is worshipped to perform the rites, using the stone in the temple as a substitute for their own *digu* stones. Research has revealed that as many as half the upper caste families of Patan worship their *digu* here.[27] The number of people who make use of this stone in this way is so large that during the *digupūjā* season they often have to wait a long time before their turn comes, and when it does they only have time to perform a brief *digupūjā*. The animals that are customarily sacrificed may be cooked and eaten in one of the two rest houses located in the vicinity specially for this purpose.

This appears to be a unique case. There are many examples of temples containing stones that serve as a substitute for *digu* stones. But normally in such cases the original *digu* stones are located elsewhere. This alternative is available to those families who have moved far from their original homes where their *digu* is located and find it hard for them to go there to worship it. Pūrṇacaṇḍī / Siddhilakṣmī

[26] I was told this story by Nūtan Śarmā, a Valā Rājopādhyāya, who heard it from his grandmother who belongs to the Valānimā lineage of Rājopādhyāyas.

[27] Nūtan Śarmā has made a survey of more than 6,500 houses in Patan as a part of his doctoral research. This fact is one of his many findings. I am grateful to him for this information.

plays a similar role, with the important difference that, in the form of a stone, this goddess functions as the *digu* directly for those families who have no other stone.

There is an old inscription on the temple wall that establishes that the temple was indeed constructed during the reign of Siddhinarasiṁhamalla. This means that this unique custom cannot predate the middle of the seventeenth century, unless there were other such stones, or indeed this one itself was being used for this purpose. If the legend concerning the finding of the stone in the Nakhu river is true, then the latter hypothesis can be discarded.

The reason why all this is possible is because the *digu* stone is just a temporary dwelling place of the lineage deity. Thus an essential preliminary to *digupūjā* is the invocation of the presence of the lineage deity into the stone. This can be done even when the stone is already 'occupied' by another deity. Indeed, Newars frequently invoke the presence of deities in various objects, including ritual diagrams, jars, and the other implements used in the ritual, sacrificial offerings, the place where the rite is performed, the sacrificial fire, themselves as priests [28] and in other people. Deities may even be invoked into icons of other deities.[29] Despite much controversy con-

[28] When powerful, secret deities need to be taken out in procession during festivals, bundles are carried around the processional route. The general public is led to believe that they contain the 'original' form of the deity. At times there are two such mysterious bundles, thus adding further to the confusion and speculation. Even seasoned western researchers have been caught up in such 'intrigues'. Referring to the famous New Year's festival — Bisket Yātrā — in Bhaktapur, Vergati tells us that: "crushed in a large crowd I could watch what was happening in the Main Chowk [of the royal palace where Taleju's shrine is located] at the time of *Bisket jātrā* but I was never able to see the box which reputedly contains the *yantra* of the goddess Taleju" (Vergati 1995: 9). But even if Vergati had been able to see the box or even its contents, she would not have seen the deity because in actual fact, in this case as in many other such instances, the deity is not in what is being carried but within the person who carries it. Prior to his emergence in the public space the bearer has mentally extracted the deity or a part of it from its hidden location and projected it into his heart where it is safe and well hidden.

[29] This is why Siddhilakṣmī or Pūrṇacaṇḍī may not be the identity of the lineage deity of the families who worship their *digu* in the temple of Pūrṇacaṇḍī referred to previously. It is common practice amongst Newars, especially if

cerning this matter, after study of the rituals involved [30] and penetrating enquiry, there can be no doubt that the higher castes invoke their lineage goddess into the *digu* stone.[31] One or more representations of this goddess (yantra and/or icon) are normally kept in a Tantric shrine, either a separate building (*āgañchem*) or, more commonly, a room in the house (*āgañkuthi*) set aside for this purpose.

The main officiant for this rite is the lineage elder — the *thakāli*. If he is not initiated or unable, the rite may be performed by another senior member of the lineage. But if none have been initiated, it must necessarily be done by the lineage priest, who may be a Brahmin or, more commonly for such rituals, a Karmācārya.

they wish the identity of the deity they are worshipping to be kept secret, to project the deity they are worshipping onto another one. In this way, it appears to the onlooker that a certain deity is being worshipped whereas, in fact, that deity simply serves as the vehicle of the deity that is really being worshipped.

[30] It may appear at first sight that there are no written liturgies for *digupūjā* or the rites performed at large festivals. But this is not the case for the higher castes at least. Thus the NGMPP has microfilmed a manuscript of the liturgy prescribed for the worship of the *digu* of the Malla kings, Dviṁṇāju. The text is simply called *Dviṁmājupūjā* and is NGMPP reel no. B 703/7. In order to find the written liturgies for the secret rites performed in public festivals, one must first know the deities that are worshipped on these occasions and the rites performed at that time. During Bisket Yātrā, for example, the rite performed in secret in the Malla palace in Bhaktapur is centred on the ceremonial raising of a banner in honour of the goddess Siddhilakṣmī. Several manuscripts of this liturgy have been microfimed by the NGMPP. One is the *Siddhilakṣmī-koṭyāhutidhvajārohaṇavarṣavardhanavidhi,* NGMPP reel no. A 249/4.

[31] Vergati writes concerning *digupūjā*: "The annual ceremony always takes place according to the following schema: the *pūjā* begins with a meditation by all the members of the lineage who, in their minds, focus on the image of their chosen deity. The head of the lineage (or the ritual specialist) invites the deity to take its place in the stones. An animal victim is then slaughtered..." (Vergati 1995: 55ff.). A little further on she describes this procedure in greater detail: "Those who participate in the *pūjā* stand facing the stones. The officiant is in front of them, also facing the stones. All are bare-headed, with hands joined at chest level, fingers pointing to the ground. The participants attempt to visualize the image of the deity and to project it into the stone. Before the silent meditation (*āvāhana* [that is, invocation]) which lasts several minutes, the *digu dyo* [i.e. *dyaḥ*] stone is only a stone: afterwards, it is the seat of the divinity throughout the duration of the ceremony" (ibid. 57).

As I have noted already, the lower castes who are not allowed to take Tantric initiation worship non-Tantric deities (and in some cases Bhairava) in the *digu* stone. The rites may also be done by a Karmācārya or a Brahmin for them, but it is much more usual for them to do it for themselves. Even though they do not take initiation from a Brahmin, they also maintain a room or shrine where an Image of the deity is kept. But in many cases the identity of the deity is not kept as scrupulously secret as it would be by the higher castes.

I believe that all these facts make sense if we postulate the existence of an original cutural substratum or substrata which predate the introduction of Buddhism and Hinduism. I believe the form of this core culture may be discerned, to some degree at least, by examining the practices and beliefs that cannot be traced to the Sanskrit texts, Buddhist or Hindu, those, that is, that are not Indian. This does not, of course, exclude other possible influences, but these appear to be minor compared to those from India. The society, culture and religion of the farmer castes (*jyāpu, maharjan*) appears in many respects to coincide most with this ancient core, although it has undergone a steady process of Sanskritization for many centuries. As Gellner writes:

"It is remarkable that although nearly all other Newar caste subgroups have a myth which traces their origin to somewhere else, usually India, the Maharjans have no such myth. Even at the level of the sub-caste within one city there appear to be no such myths. As distinct from this, specific lineages do of course often have traditions which record their migration from some other place within the Valley. Thus, not claiming to come from outside, the Maharjans have been seen to be the true locals. This has led some observers to see them as descendents of the original inhabitants of the Valley and to look for ancient survivals in their culture and social practices." (Gellner 1995: 160)

This older religion appears to have been strongly centred on ancestor worship that was based on the belief that people, both men and women, acquire the status of deity as they grow old. Accordingly, Newars still undergo three succesive rites of passage (called *burā jaṁkwa*) every ten years from the time they reach the age of 77 years 7 months 7 days 7 *ghaṭī* (about 2 hours) and 7 *pala*s (about 2

minutes). After this ritual a person "leaves the world of men for that of the gods" (Vergati 1995: 12). If he lives to undergo the third ritual passage he is belived to be fully deified. Thus the very first member of the clan was the most senior, the most divine. I believe, although no immediately apparent trace of this belief survives, that he was the original deity whose presence was invoked in the *digu* stone.[32] Whether this is true or not there can be no doubt that from the start this religion was domestic. The domestic unit was not the family, not even the extended joint family, as in India, but the *phuki* — the group of closely related patrilineal families. I suggest that the priests of the *phuki*s were the most aged members. They performed the rites of passage for the *phuki* members and the worship of the *phuki*'s deities.

Another important surviving feature of this religion is the worship of protectors. They are the original forms of the Gaṇeśas who protect each locality, the Bhairavas who protect whole towns and villages or large areas of them, the Mothers who encircle human settlements, and others. Like the *digu* deities, they have iconic counterparts which are usually kept apart except on certain occasions when the two are brought together. In Newari the Bhairavas and the Mothers can be generically referred to as Āju (lit. 'grandfather') and Ājimā (lit. 'grandmother'), implying, it seems, that some of them, at least, were believed to have originally been deified human beings. Thus, according to Newar legend, some of the Bhairavas were originally

[32] I say this fully conscious of how controversial this view is. Thus Ishii writing about the Newar village of Satungal says: "Although the *digu dyaḥ* is the deity of the lineage there is not the slightest suggestion of what one finds in other cultures, that the lineage god is a deified ancestor. Neither the legends about the early settlers of Satungal nor the *śrāddha* ceremony is related to this deity. Moreover, in some cases, the same *digu dyaḥ* is worshipped by many groups not patrilineally related, though all patrilineally related people worship the same *digu dyaḥ*" (Ishii 1995: 146). In reply one could say that *srāddha* rites belong to a separate ritual dimension. And we have seen that the same stone may be the abode of different lineage deities for different people. It is possible that the ancestral origin of the *digu dyaḥ* and of the other ancient deities of the early inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley has been forgotten.

kings who, as deities, continue the royal function they perform as human beings of protecting their people.[33]

All these beings were, and still are, worshipped in stones. The Sanskritized name for such stones is, appropriately, *pīṭha,* which literally means 'seat'. While the *digu* stones (which are never referred to as *pīṭhas*) originally marked the location of the *phuki* and so are moveable and had human origin, the *pīṭha* stones are markers and delineators of place common to the community as a whole. They were not placed in their locations but discovered there. They protect larger or smaller areas, according to their status, function and location, all three of which are interrelated. Thus some mark and protect areas that together cover the whole Valley. Others protect villages, sectors of towns, the roads, crossroads, houses, and courtyards, even refuse dumps. Such stones are to be found everywhere, both in the countryside and — where they are particularly profuse — in human settlements. These stones are, indeed must be, worshipped by those who live close to them. Occasionally the inhabitants of a town or village decide that they should worship all the stones in which dei-

[33] Anderson (1975: 156) writes that:

"The estimated five million Bhairab images in Nepal are seen in sixty-four different manifestations and forms depicting his combined human, demonic and animal characteristics."

These sixty-four manifestations are the male counterparts of the sixty-four yoginīs. This purely Tantric representation also depicts both the Bhairavas and their consorts as divinized human beings, that is, perfect Tantric adepts (*siddha*) and the female adepts with which they unite. Here, as in many other instances, the representations of the Sanskrit scriptures coincide in principle with popular local beliefs. The human origin of one of the major Bhairavas in Kathmandu illustrates this thesis. He is represented by five small stones in an open temple site near the Bagmati River between Tripureśvara and Kālīmaṭī, just south of old Kathmandu. The Newars, Anderson informs us, "conforming with legends in which many Bhairabs are identified as various Nepalese kings, say Pachali is the name of one such sovereign who ruled from Farping village near Chobar Gorge" (ibid. 158). Another myth represents Pacali Bhairava as belonging to the Jyāpu farmer caste and his lover a Khasai (butcher) girl. Chalier-Visuvalingam has published a lengthy and very detailed article on the cult of Pacali Bhairava to which the reader is referred (see bibliography).

ties or other beings reside. When this took place in Patan in 1989 Gutschow counted 442 of them.[34]

An important clue to the manner in which this earlier religion, centred on the worship of such stones, is incorporated into the Sanskritic religions of India, both Hindu and Buddhist, is the ritual that takes place when the iconic counterparts of the stones are brought to them. This rite is essentially a form of installation (*prāṇapratiṣṭhā*) of the deity into the stone and the icon (or its representation), followed by worship. We witness here the symbiosis of the two religions. The stone draws its life force (*prāṇa*) from the icon and the icon from the stone. The two must therefore, at some time at least, be worshipped together. This may take place just once a year or more often, according to custom. In the case of the royal goddess Taleju, the stone which is the *digu* of the Malla kings (called Dvirṁmāju) must always be worshipped along with its equivalent iconic form and vice versa even in the course of the daily rites (*nityapūjā*). These rituals always involve the invocation of the deity (*āvāhana*), which can be considered, in some respects, to be a reduced form of the fully developed rite of installation. We observe in this way how the Sanskrit mantras, and especially the powerful Tantric mantras used in such rites Sanskritize the earlier

[34] Gutschow writes:

"The irreversible character of urban space is closely linked to the idea that essentially the quality of 'place' reveals itself through aniconic representations of gods and goddesses, namely, Gaṇeśa, Bhairava, and Durgā. In Patan there are altogether 442 such representations, which are collectively called pigā, as the specific connotation remains mostly vague. These pigā are unhewn stones, which emerge out of the ground and reach eventually a height of one or two meters; or they are flat stones, integrated into the regular pavement of squares and streets. These stones have first been discovered or 'found' by ritual specialists through Tantric power and in many cases the legends tied to this discovery have survived and form the base for a ritual reenactment of that detection of the sacred." (Gutschow 1995: 112ff.)

One may hazard the suggestion that these discoveries are more often than not colonizations of the earlier, autochthonous, deities in the stones by their Tantric counterparts brought about by these Tantric ritual specialists. Thus what Gutschow explains is the "aniconic infrastructure of the town" that represents "the power of the place which enables people to live there" (ibid.) has become a network of Tantric energies wielded by the protectors of place.

aniconic forms and how these latter are reaffirmed in their function of contributing their energy to the empowerment of the deities from which these mantras originate. Thus the ancient guardians of the Newars become the attendants of the Tantric goddesses of the higher castes, empowering them even as they are empowered by them to perform their functions as protectors of place and lineage.

The sources of the history of the development of these forms of Tantrism amongst the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley include the common sources of any aspect of Nepalese history, namely, inscriptions, chronicles, the records of land grants, business transactions, corporate trusts (*guṭhi*s) and the colophons of manuscripts containing dates or dateable references. But particularly important, and as yet virtually untouched, are the immense number of liturgical works (*paddhati*, *pūjāvidhi*) the Newars have written to regulate, in part at least, their very many and often extremely extensive, esoteric ritual procedures. Indeed, along with ethnological and historical studies, a study of these texts, together with the Tantras that are their primary literary sources, is essential in order to understand the specific form Newar Śāktism has assumed over the past thousand years since its introduction into the Valley from India.

These Hindu texts (I am not concerned with Newar Buddhism) can be broadly classified, in terms of this enquiry, into three basic types:

1) Those liturgies that are constructed entirely from materials drawn from Tantric sources, that is, from texts written in Sanskrit called Tantras or synonyms of that term.

2) Those liturgies which contain, usually in very moderate degrees, passages drawn from the Vedas which, Newar Brahmins insist, can only be recited by them. These are important but relatively few.

3) Those liturgies that contain in varying degrees material drawn from other sources that are not in written form. These include an immense range of ritual activity that appears to be derived from local custom. It is worth noting that very little of this activity is, in the form it is at present, intrinsically articulate. When something is said, the speaker makes use of a language which is not local, namely, Sanskrit, even if it is usually quite corrupt and, not uncommonly, mixed with Newari. In order to avoid the controversial term 'tribal', one could call these sources, simply, non-Sanskritic.

For the sake of clarity, it is worth stressing that there is also a great deal of ritual activity that takes place 'without a book', as the Newars put it. This may also be to varying degrees Sanskritic in the sense that it is both guided by the religious notions and pantheon common to Hindus throughout South Asia and/or related to forms of the sacred that are local and, therefore, non-Sanskritic. Although such non-literate ritual activity is important and, statistically, constitutes a considerable amount of the ritual activity Newars engage in, that done 'with a book' is considered to be the most powerful, however great the non-Sanskritic elements it may contain.

If we examine these liturgies referring to the simple three-fold classification outlined above, we notice that the basic structure, even of those of the third type, is the one which is most coherently and systematically elaborated in the first type, to which belong liturgies constructed entirely from materials drawn from Tantric sources. In this tangible and direct manner Tantrism serves as a vehicle of Sanskritization at the very core of Newar culture, radically rooted as it is in religion that is to a very large degree ritualistic. In this and other ways, notably its art, Tantrism is a ubiquitous part of Newar culture. For high-caste Newars, and to proportionately varying degrees as one descends the hierarchy of the Newar caste system, insofar as the degree of access to these rites is a measure of caste status, esoteric Tantric rites combine with domestic rituals including, as we have seen, the *smārta* rites of passage and the worship of lineage deities (*digu dyaḥ*). They also form an invariable part of civic festivals. In both cases they perform the essential function of energizing them from 'within' to render them effective. This esoteric Sanskritic dimension of Newar religious culture is most developed amongst the higher castes because only they are allowed to take the initiation which authorize them to perform and attend the purely Tantric rituals in their most complete form belonging to the first group. The upper sections of the lower castes have access to such rituals, although these are centred on deities who serve as attendants of the esoteric deities of the higher castes.[35]

[35] These attendants — for the most part one or other of the Eight Mothers who surround and protect Newar settlements — are identified by initiates with the great lineage goddesses, especially Kubjikā, because they are emanated from them.

Moreover, as one goes down the caste hierarchy, rituals tend to contain, as one would expect, greater proportions of non-Sanskritic elements. Although not prominent in the esoteric Tantric rituals of the higher castes, they do make their appearance in some of the more elaborate occasional Tantric rites of even Newar Brahmins.

Another distinguishing feature of the esoteric religion of the higher castes in relation to the more exoteric religion of the lower is that the former is centred on the worship of goddesses, while the equivalent religion of the lower castes concentrates more on their male equivalents. I must stress that I am contrasting the esoteric religion of the high castes to which access can only be had through initiation with that of the lower castes who are generally not entitled to take such initiations.

But rather than examine the development of Newar Tantrism that has taken place at the hands of the Newars themselves as reflected by these liturgical works, I wish instead to explore some of the salient features and developments of the specifically Tantric traditions that are their original and most authoritative Sanskrit sources. In order to do this I will focus primarily on the Tantras and related material pertaining to the early period of the development of Kaula Tantrism, that is, prior to the thirteenth century of the current era.[36]

[36] It is possible to distinguish two great periods of development of Hindu Tantric traditions. The dividing line between them are the works of the monistic Kashmiri Śaiva exegetes beginning with Vasugupta (ninth century) and ending with Jayaratha (thirteenth century). For uncertain reasons, of which I believe the major one to be the disruption brought about by the progressive Muslim conquest of North India, there was a sudden catastrophic break in most of the lineages of the major Tantric traditions in northern India in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Most of the Tantric traditions that survived this break were those found in South India at that time. One major exception of particular importance for this study is the Kubjikā cult, which by this time was, it seems, well established amongst the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley and has continued to develop there since then. Another is the cult of Tripurā.

The new Tantrism that developed after this period in northern India was dominantly Śākta, that is, centred on goddess cults. A great deal of the contents of these cults were built up from the vague memories of the earlier ones that had been lost but which were generally more extensively and systematically developed than their successors.

This is because, although the Newars continued to absorb forms of Tantrism from North India throughout the period of the development of Hindu, especially Śākta, Tantrism in that region, the Tantric traditions of the early period centred on the goddesses Kubjikā, Kālī and Tripurā have remained by far the most dominant sources for them.[37]

Amongst these three goddesses two are especially important. One is Kubjikā because she appears, from the field work done so far, to be the goddess of most, if not all, of the higher-caste priests of the Hindu Newars. This is certainly true in Bhaktapur. It is probably for this reason, and insofar as it is the priests who have made the liturgies, that Kubjikā functions in innumerable ways, which are still the objects of research, as the energizing centre of the Newar esoteric Śākta pantheon.[38]

[37] The group of Ten Goddesses, the so-called Daśa Mahāvidyā, which became a very important configuration of divine forms in North India from about the sixteenth century onwards, are well known to the Newars. They even figure in the sacred geographies of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur. From what I have been able to gather from interviews, they are also to be found in some of the rooms or chapels (*āgañ*) of higher-caste initiates where they worship their Tantric family goddesses (*kuladevatā*). Apart from the aniconic stones in which they reside (*pīṭha*) encircling Kathmandu and Patan, some of them have temples. One important temple is dedicated to the goddess Bagalāmukhī. It is located in the temple complex of Kumbheśvara in Patan. Framed paintings of all ten of the Daśa Mahāvidyās adorn the upper part of the outer walls.

[38] One striking example of the way this is done is found in most of the Newar liturgies of all these Kaula goddesses. The initial purification of the hands and body of the officiant that must precede all Tantric rituals is done by mentally projecting mantras onto the body. This transforms the body, speech and mind of the officiant into that of a deity and so renders him fit to worship the deity. The mantra for this process (technically called *nyāsa* — lit. 'deposition') is invariable Kubjikā's Thirty-Two-Syllable Vidyā (the Newars call it '*battīsī*' which literally means 'thirty-two-(syllabled) one'). The Kaula initiation which is most popular in Bhaktapur is called the *Vaśiṣṭhadīkṣākarmapaddhati* (which is probably a misnomer for *Viśiṣṭadīkṣākarmapaddhati*). I was given a copy by a Bhairavācārya of Bhaktapur. The preparatory phases of the initiation which render the disciple fit to receive the mantra of his or her lineage goddess require that the teacher project the mantras of Kubjikā onto the disciple's body. This is invariably the case regardless of the identity of the lineage goddess of the person receiving initiation. The basic identity of the initiate as a ritual agent is here clearly revealed to be Kubjikā. I plan to deal extensively with this important and complex aspect of Newar Śāktism in future publications.

The other goddess is Kālī. Although goddesses have numerous forms, as do South Asian deities in general, some of Kālī's forms have especially well-defined identities. Three of these figure prominently in Newar esoteric Śāktism. These are Dakṣiṇakālī, Guhyakālī and Siddhilakṣmī.[39] Especially the last two are so well defined that even though they are both forms of Kālī, they possess separate and extensive Tantras of their own from which the basics of their cults, that is, their maṇḍalas and mantras, are drawn. These Tantras are the *Guhyakālītantra* [40] along with the *Mahākālasaṁhitā* [41] and the

[39] The correct Sanskrit name of this goddess is Siddhalakṣmī, but she is known to the Newars as Siddhilakṣmī. As these are her last and if not her only worshippers, certainly they are the most important ones left, I prefer the Newari form to which I am, anyway, habituated.

[40] According to Divākar Ācārya, whom I gratefully acknowledge for the information, there is a fourteenth-century palm leaf manuscript of this Tantra preserved in the Kaisar Library in Kathmandu. Another incomplete manuscript has been microfilmed by the NGMPP from a private collection. The root mantra of Guhyakālī is taken from this Tantra. This is the form of the mantra used in the worship of Guhyakālī at night (*niśārcana*) that takes place at the conclusion of her procession (*yātrā*) from the Taleju temple in Kathmandu to her main temple in the Paśupati area (see Michaels 1994 for details). The liturgy (the text of which is called *Guhyeśvarīniśārcanavidhiḥ*, NGMPP reel no. A 948/4) is centred on the Secret (*guhya*) Kālī's secret identity, namely, Kubjikā, or, to be more precise, Kubjikā's Weapon. The form of the mantra itself confirms this identity by addressing the goddess as Guhyakubjikā as follows:

OṂ GUHYAKUBJIKE HŪṂ PHAṬ MAMA SARVOPADRAVĀYA YANTRAMANTRATANTRACŪRṆAPRAYOGĀDIKAṂ YENA KṚTAṂ KĀRĀYITAṂ KARIṢYATI TĀN SARVĀN HANA HANA DAṂṢṬRĀKARĀLI HREṂ HRĪṂ HŪṂ HREṂ HŪṂ PHAṬ GUHYAKUBJIKĀYAI SVĀHĀ

The mantra is found in the tenth chapter of the KMT. By omitting OṂ and SVĀHĀ the Sword Weapon (*khaḍgāstra*) mantra is formed. This is the mantra of one of Kubjikā's Maids (Dūtī), namely, that of the Weapon. She is identified with Guhyakālī who is also known as Guhyeśvarī. The KMT goes on to inform us that the source of this mantra is the separate, independent (*svatantra*) Tantra called *Guhyakālī* consisting of 125,000 verses (KMT 10/20-30). This means not only that the cult of Guhyakālī pre-existed the KMT, but that it was colonized by the Kubjikā cult at a very early period of its development. As there is at least one Nepalese manuscript of the KMT belonging to the first half of the eleventh century (see below), we know that this must have taken place by that time.

Jayadrathayāmala,[42] respectively. Of these two Siddhilakṣmī enjoys a place of special honour as the secret lineage goddess of the former

[41] Wright's *History of Nepal* (1966: 148) refers to a Tirhutīya (i.e. Maithili) Brahmin called Narasiṁha Ṭhākur who was instrumental in inducing King Pratāpamalla to found the well-known Guhyeśvarī temple close to the Paśupatinātha temple near Kathmandu. This took place in 1654 A.D. According to this chronicle he found the spot where the goddess was located "having perused the book Mahākāla Sanhitā (sic)". A similar reference is found in the *Rājavaṁśāvalī* (6: 4). The worship of Guhyeśvarī in the Valley in conjunction with Paśupati certainly predates the founding of this temple (Michaels 1994: 315). Indeed, the couple and their residence in the Valley are mentioned in several early Tantras, including those of the Kubjikā cult. She is known, for example, to the *Niśisaṁcāratantra*, of which there is a palm leaf manuscript (see bibliography). The text is written in old Newari script which may be as old as the twelfth century or earlier. But although the text is early, the exposition of the *pīṭha*s found in this text does not agree with that found in references from the *Niśisaṁcāra* quoted in Kashmiri works (see Dyczkowski 1988: 156 fn. 251). Several folios of this manuscript are missing; moreover, the order of the remaining ones is badly disarranged. The reference begins on the bottom line of the first part of the fourth folio in the serial order in which the manuscript was microfilmed. The unedited text reads:

nepāle saṁsthitan devaṁ paśunāṁm patir iṣyate |
guhyeśvarīsamāyuktaṁ sthānapālasamanvitaṁ ||

"The god who resides in Nepal is considered to be the lord of the fettered (i.e. Paśupati). He is linked to Guhyeśvarī and is accompanied by the guardian(s) of the place."

The *Mahākālasaṁhitā* has been published (see the bibliography). There are no early references to this text and it is virtually unknown outside the Kathmandu Valley. One wonders whether it was a Newar creation. Further research will disclose the degree of influence this Tantra, of which there are numerous Nepalese manuscripts, has exerted on the Newar cult of Guhyakālī.

[42] This Tantra which, along with the *Manthānabhairavatantra* of the Kubjikā school, is the longest known in existence, extends for 24,000 verses. No part of it has yet been edited and published. It was well known to the Kashmiri Śaivites of the eleventh century who referred to it respectfully as 'Tantrarājabhaṭṭāraka' ṣ the Venerable King of Tantras. This was a major source of the Kashmiri Kālī cult (as Kālasaṁkarṣaṇī) as it is of the cult of the goddess Taleju (i.e. Siddhilakṣmī) for the Newars.

Malla kings, known to the public as Taleju.[43] It is worth noting that even in the case of the cult of the goddess Siddhilakṣmī, despite her central role in Newar Śāktism, both in its most esoteric forms and its public manifestations, where she figures as Taleju, the goddess Kubjikā operates, as elsewhere in the rich complex of Newar Śāktism, as the primary source of power in numerous very secret, and hence especially powerful, ritual contexts. An example of this process is the secret connection that the Taleju priest establishes between the two goddesses. It is this connection and identification, enacted ritually at prime moments in the liturgical cycle, which keeps the king's goddess powerful. Thus the source of power and, ultimately, the most fundamental identity of Siddhilakṣmī — the lineage goddess of the king — is Kubjikā, the lineage goddess of his priest.

But despite her truly extraordinary importance for Newar Śāktas, the goddess Kubjikā, unlike the popular goddesses Kālī and Tripurā, is virtually unknown outside the circles of her Newar initiates in the Kathmandu Valley. Even so, the Kaula Tantras concerned with her cult are numerous and extensive, as is befitting of a goddess that has been given such prominence. Her virtually total obscurity outside Nepal does not mean that Kubjikā is a Nepalese goddess. The Newars have been surprisingly prolific as compilers of liturgical works for their own rituals, but there is, as yet, little evidence that they have

[43] Referring to the goddess Kālī, Sanderson (1988: 684) states that: "the Newars, who maintain the early traditions of the region, preserve her link with the Northern Transmission. For them Guhyakālī is the embodiment of that branch of Kaulism. Linked with her in this role is the white goddess Siddhalakṣmī (always written Siddhilakṣmī in Nepal) one of the apotropaic deities (Pratyaṅgirā) of the Jayadrathayāmala and the patron goddess of the Malla kings (1200-1768) and their descendants." This statement is, I suppose, based on the study of Newar Kaula liturgies. Thus, without having to ask embarrassing questions the scholar has penetrated one of the Newars' most closely guarded secrets by studying their liturgies. This is a fine example of how the work of the anthropologist in the field can be usefully supplemented by that of the textual scholar. We may also note that if Sanderson is correct when he says that "Guhyakālī is the embodiment of the Northern Transmission" for the Newars, it follows that the Northern Transmission has been subordinated by them to the Western Transmission belonging to the goddess Kubjikā.

composed Tantras of their own.[44] It appears from the studies made so far that virtually all of the very many Tantras found in manuscripts in Nepal were labouriously copied and brought from outside the Kathmandu Valley. Despite the very rich sacred geography of the Kubjikā Tantras, Nepal is only very rarely mentioned. On the other hand, innumerable references in the texts clearly indicate that Kubjikā was originally an Indian goddess. Specifically, the Kubjikā Tantras frequently refer to her as the goddess of the land of Koṅkaṇa, which corresponds to the long strip of land between the Western Ghats and the sea, and, even more specifically, to her connection with the city of Candrapura. Of the many places sacred to the goddess in India mentioned in her Tantras, only Candrapura is identified as the home (*veśman* lit. 'house') of the Western Transmission, which is that of the Kubjikā cult. The passage cited below goes so far as to identify the place with the goddess's maṇḍala, her most personal abode:

"That, indeed, is the Western House (*veśman*) called the City of the Moon (Candrapura). This is the first maṇḍala and (first source of) authority for (the initiates) who recite mantras."[45]

[44] See the end of note 41. The *Kubjikopaniṣad,* although not technically a Tantra, is virtually so in much of its content. This text may have been produced by a Newar Brahmin. The Brahminical pseudo-Vedic character of the text is not only attested by the extensive quotations it makes from the *Atharvaveda* but by its own statement that "a worshipper of Kubjikā ... should be a brahman from Parāśara's clan and a teacher in the school of Pippalāda-śaunaka as taught in the Atharvaveda" (*Kubjikopaniṣad* 10/2). The relatively late date of the text is indicated by the central place it gives to the Ten Mahāvidyās (see above fn. 37). That the text may well have been written by a Newar initiate who was acquainted with the worship of both Kubjikā and Siddhilakṣmī transpires from the central place given to Siddhilakṣmī as the most important of the Mahāvidyās and her identification with Kubjikā in her form as Siddhikubjī. By the time the Ten Mahāvidyās became popular in India, the worship of Siddhilakṣmī and other related goddesses outside the Kathmandu Valley had probably ceased. Moreover, the worship of Siddhilakṣmī as one of the Ten Mahāvidyās in the primary textual sources is very rare, if not unique to this text. Thus her place of honour as the greatest, most regal of these ten 'royal' goddesses, as they are described in this text, indicates that this text may well have been written by a Newar Brahmin initiate who may have been one of the priests of the goddess Taleju / Siddhilakṣmī.

[45] *etad vai paścimaṁ veśma candrapuryeti nāmataḥ |*
maṇḍalaṁ prathamedaṁ tu adhikāraṁ tu mantriṇām || (KuKh 3/12)

We know of two Candrapuras that fit the descriptions found in the texts. One was an important town in what is now the Garwal district of the western Himalaya. Not far from it is a mountain called Candraparvata. Moreover, both these places are approximately to the west of Kailāsa, which is where these places are said to be located by the KMT, the earliest and root Tantra of the Kubjikā cult.[46] On the basis of this and other references, and because of the goddess's many association with mountains, I have expressed the opinion in a previous publication that Candrapura was located somewhere in the Himalayas (Dyczkowski 1988a: 91). This was also the opinion of Goudriaan (Goudriaan 1981: 52) but not of Schoterman (Schoterman 1982: 37) who preferred the South Indian location detailed below.

The other Candrapura is located in Goa, the ancient kingdom of Koṅkaṇa. Nowadays it is called Chandor, and it was the capital of the Śilāhāras, who ruled this area in the fourth century A.D. At the beginning of the eleventh century, the Kadambas of Goa under Ṣāṣṭhadeva (c. 1005-1050 A.D.) extended their authority over the whole of Goa, vanquishing the Śilāhāras. They moved the capital from Candrapura (Chandor) to Goapurī (Goa Velha) in about 1052.[47] The following passage from chapter 43 of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* confirms the connection between Candrapura and the Kadamba kings. The passage talks about an important founder figure called Siddhanātha (variously named, Oḍḍīsanātha, Tuṣṇīnātha, and Kūrmanātha in the text) and his advent to the city of Candrapura, of which the Tantra says:

"There is a city there called Candrapura (the City of the Moon) with (many) citizens located on the beautiful and extensive shore of the western sea in the auspicious forest by the sea in the great land called Koṅkaṇa." [48]

[46] *meroḥ paścimadigbhāge* | (KMT 1/59c)

[47] S. Rajagopalan 1987: p. 3-4.

[48] This and the following references are taken from my, as yet, unpublished critical editions. The original readings, where they differ from the edited text are in square brackets.

paścimasya samudrasya tīre ramye suvistare |||
koṅkaṇākhye mahādeśe sāgarasya [*-rāya*] *vane śubhe* |
tatra candrapuraṁ nāma nagaraṁ nāgarair vṛtam || (ṢaṭSS 43/27-8).

The *Śrīmatottara* similarly describes Candrapura as being close to mountains and the sea (*samudrasyopakaṇṭhe* 1/15c).

The text continues:

"The king there was called Candraprabha and he belonged to the dynasty of the Kadambas. Like the king of the gods, he was the ruler of all the worlds." [49]

The text goes on to relate how the king took initiation from the sage and was admonished by him to ensure that all his subjects did the same. The Tantra thus presents Kubjikā as a goddess of a royal cult, and she is indeed one of the Newars' royal goddesses. And there seems to be little reason to doubt that, at some stage in the early development of the tradition, Kubjikā was a South Indian goddess.[50] However, this South Indian Candrapura may not have been the goddess's original home. The earlier KMT does refer to the land of Koṅkaṇa but does not stress its importance in the emphatic manner the later Kubjikā Tantras do. In fact, as Heilijgers-Seelen (1994: 2) points out: "the texts themselves are inconsistent with regard to the place of origin of the Kubjikā cult, but the basic text [i.e. the KMT] seems to locate this place somewhere in northern India in the western regions of the Himalayas." The later Tantras, namely the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* and the *Manthānabhairavatantra*, on the other hand, repeatedly stress the connection between Candrapura and Koṅkaṇa. These facts seem to indicate that the Kubjikā cult was, as Goudriaan says, "originally located in the Himalayan region" (Goudriaan 1981: 52). Subsequently, probably not much after it began (which was, prob-

[49] *tatra candraprabho nāma rājā kadambavaṁśajaḥ* [*-vaṁsajaḥ*] | *śāsitā sarvalokānāṁ tridaśādhipatir yathā* || (Ibid. 42/33)

[50] It is significant in this regard that Vidyānanda, a fourteenth-century South Indian commentator on the *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava* 'seems to have possessed', as the editors of the KMT inform us, "a fair knowledge of the texts of the Kubjikā school because he repeatedly refers to them" (Goudriaan and Schoterman 1988: 18). Maheśvarānanda, who was a disciple of Vidyānanda and lived in the part of South India ruled at that time by the Cholas, quotes from Kubjikā sources in three places in his auto-commentary on the *Mahārthamañjarī* (two on p. 4 and one on p. 126). Although these references have not been traced in the KMT, he appears to have been acquainted with the Kubjikā Tantras which, although little known, must therefore have been in circulation in South India in the fourteenth century. For the few other references drawn from the KMT see the introduction to the edition of Goudriaan and Schoterman (14ff.).

ably in second half of the tenth century), the centre of the cult shifted to the mid-western coastal regions of India where, by a fortunate coincidence or design, another Candrapura was located. That the cult was already established in central India by the eleventh century with its centre in this Candrapura is supported by the following inscription from Karṇaṭaka (Nelamangala tāluka) dated 1030 A.D. commemorating the founding of a Siddheśvara temple:

"At the foot of a wonderful tree in Candrapurī, [which is] situated by the western ocean, Ādinātha is installed. By merely recalling his excellent lotus feet, the residual effects of acts committed in past lives are destroyed. His disciple ... was Chāyādinātha ['Shadow Ādinātha'. His disciple was Stambhanātha].... His son, versed in the meaning of the Kālāgama [sic. Kulāgama], was the *yati* Dvīpanātha.... His disciple was born Mauninātha *munipa.* The bearer of the latter's commands was Rūpaśiva [the priest in charge of the temple] ... devoted to the *Śaivāgama.*"[51]

It is possible that the Rūpaśiva mentioned in this inscription is the same Rūpaśiva who wrote, or compiled, a commentary on sections of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* and the *Manthānabhairavatantra.* If so, we know from the colophon of his work that he resided at some time in Kashmir [52] and received initiation in Pravarapura (modern Shrinagar) where, as the colophon states, "the venerable Vitastā joins the Indus".[53] Although the Kubjikā cult was not popular in Kashmir, there is evidence attesting its presence there in the first half of the eleventh century.[54] We must be cautious, however, in making this identification because the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* and the *Manthānabhairavatantra* themselves cannot be dated earlier than the beginning of the eleventh century, both of them apparently referring to major Muslim invasions. Thus, the latter text states that the demon

[51] Quoted by White 1996: 94 from Saletore 1937: 20ff.

[52] In the colophon of the MBT *ṭīkā* (fl. 186), the author says of himself that he is "the ornament (*tilaka*) of the venerable land of Kashmir and resides in the venerable town of Pravarapura (i.e. Shrinagar) -"
(*śrīkāśmīradeśatilakabhūtaśrīpravarapurāntargata-*).

[53] *-śrīvitastāsindhusaṅgame prārthanā prārthitā* [*prārthita*] *gṛhītā* |
(Ibid. fol.186)

[54] See Dyczkowski 1987a: 7ff.

Rāvaṇa incarnated in this Age of Darkness (*kaliyuga*) and descended onto the bank of the Indus (Dyczkowski 1987a: 12, 98ff.). This may be a reference to the conquest of the Punjab by Mahmūd of Ghaznī which took place in the first quarter of the eleventh century.[55] The *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* adds that in that Age of Darkness: "the Kshatriyas, though broken in battle, will act as if they are [still] powerful."[56] We may accept this early date for the compiler of the commentary and identify him with the Rūpaśiva of the inscription, assuming that the early development of the Kubjikā Tantras and related literature took place in a relatively short span of time and that it spread comparably quickly. This may be one of the reasons for the confusion between the two Candrapuras in the texts. But whether the Kubjikā cult was introduced into Nepal from the Western Himalaya as Heilijgers-Seelen (1994: 2) asserts or not is a matter for further research.

Nowadays, almost all the manuscripts of the Kubjikā Tantras and related works are in Nepal or are of Nepalese origin. The text with by far the greatest number of manuscripts is the KMT. Sixty-six manuscripts, complete and fragmentary, of the KMT have been found and examined by the editors of the KMT. This is truly a massive number for any sort of text, especially Tantric, and represents yet another measure of the immense popularity and importance of the Kubjikā cult amongst the Newars. All of these manuscripts except one, which is in old Maithili or Gauḍī script,[57] appear to be of Nepa-

[55] Mahmūd of Ghaznī became Sultan in 997 A.D. Soon after his coming to power, he began a series of raids on India from his capital, Ghaznī in Afghanistan. Historians disagree as to the exact number of these raids. According to Sir Henry Elliot, they were seventeen and took place almost every year (Smith 1995: 205) up to 1027 A.D.. Although many of these incursions drove deep into the country, Mahmūd could do no more than annex the Punjab, or a large part of it, to the Ghaznī Sultanate (ibid.: 208).

[56] ṢaṭSS 3/79cd. The translation is by Schoterman.

[57] This is NAK MS no. 5-778/58 = NGMPP reel no. A 40/18. Mithilā is the most likely major entry point for the Sanskrit texts brought into the Kathmandu Valley. There are numerous links between the Newars and the inhabitants of Mithilā. These became especially close from the reign of Sthitimalla (1367-1395 A.D.). He married Rājalladevī, a member of the Bhaktapur royal family who was of Maithili origin. Indeed, scholars dispute whether Sthitimalla himself was from Mithilā. But whether he was or not, it is a significant fact

lese origin. The oldest of these manuscripts is a short recension of the KMT called *Laghvikāmnāya* copied by Suharṣajīva during the reign of Lakṣmīkāmadeva (1024-1040 A.D.) and is dated 1037-38 A.D.[58] The colophon of a manuscript of another Kubjikā Tantra, the *Kularatnoddyota*, informs us that the original manuscript from which it was copied was transcribed by a certain Vivekaratna who came to the Valley (*nepāladeśa)* and lived in Kathmandu during the reign of Harṣadeva,[59] who is believed to have reigned between 1085 and 1099

that the later Malla kings boasted that they were of Maithili origins. The repeated attacks on the Valley from the beginning of the Malla period onwards by Maithili raiding parties demonstrate the ease with which the Valley could be penetrated from Mithilā. Again, Slusser (1982: 395) informs us that "the script employed after the fourteenth century, now designated simply as 'Newari', is closely related to the writing of Mithilā". This fact is not only indicative of the close connection between the literate culture of the two peoples, it also renders the transition of a text from India through Mithilā very easy. It is not impossible that some old manuscripts thought to be written in old forms of Newari are actually Maithili manuscripts.

[58] The manuscript is NAK no. 5-877/57 = NGMPP reel no. A 41/3. See the introduction to the edition of the KMT (p. 14), where the colophon is reproduced in full. Regmi (1965: 1965) has also referred to the same colophon.

[59] The manuscript is NAK no. 1/16 = NGMPP reel no. A206/10. It is a copy of a much older manuscript. The copiest copied it completely, including the colophon. The reference is on folio 96b and is as follows (the text has been emended):

pakṣe śive cāśvinanāmadheye tithau tṛtīyāṁ dharaṇīsute 'hni |
śrīharṣadevasya ca vardhamāne rājye mahānandakare [*-maṁdakare*] *prajānām* ||
*nepāladeśaṁ samupāgatena kāṣṭhābhidhe * * * saṁsthitena* |
svaśiṣyavargasya nibodhanāya paropakārāya kṛtaprayatnaḥ ||
bhaktyā svayaṁ śrīkularatnapūrvam uddyotayantaṁ [*-udyotasantaṁ*] *bṛhadāgamedam* |
śrīmatkulācāryavivekaratnakenāpi [*śrīmatkalācārya-*] *saṁlekhitaṁ* [*-ta*] *paṇḍitena* ||

"(The teacher) himself has come to the land of Nepal and resides in Kathmandu (*kāṣṭhābhidha*) and made an effort to instruct his disciples and help others. (He came) when Śrīharṣadeva's kingdom was prospering and gave great joy to the subjects (who resided there). (This effort was made and bore fruit in the form of this manuscript completed on) on Tuesday (*dharaṇīsute 'hni*), in the bright half (*śivapakṣa* of the lunar month of) Aśvin on the third lunar day.

A.D. (Slusser: I, 398). Thus we can safely say that the cult of the goddess Kubjikā had not only reached the Valley by the beginning of the eleventh century but was already developing throughout it. Incidentally, it is worth noting that it appears from the form of Vivekaratna's name that he was a renouncer. Thus although, as we have seen, Rājopādhyāya Brahmins became the centre and mainstay of the esoteric network of Newar Tantric Śāktism, this does not necessarily mean that they were the original propagators of it in the Kathmandu Valley. Even so, they may well have played an important role in its spread, as they certainly did in its application and adaptation to Newar culture and religious life.[60]

This great Āgama which illumines the jewel of the Śrīkula was copied (*saṁlikhitam*, lit. 'written') with devotion by the venerable Kulācārya and scholar Vivekaratna."

This reference informs us that Vivekaratna resided in *kāṣṭhābhidha*, that is, a '(place) called Kāṣṭha'. There seems little reason to doubt that he is abbreviating the Sanskrit name 'Kaṣṭhamaṇḍapa' which I have translated as Kathmandu. If the dating of the original of this manuscript is correct and it belongs to the eleventh century, then this is the earliest reference so far recovered to the place which was to fuse with its neighbouring settlements and ultimately give its name, after several centuries, to the city formed thereby. Prior to the discovery of this colophon Slusser (1982: 89) informs us that when she was writing: "the first record of Kaṣṭhamaṇḍapa as a place name is encountered in a colophon dated A.D. 1143 (N.S. 263)."

[60] It is worth mentioning in passing that the rapid spread of this, and many other Tantric systems, may well be due to the large part peripatetic ascetics played in their propagation and, probably, in their original redaction. The original redactors and propagators of the Tantras, as the language of the texts shows, possessed only a basic and frequently defective, knowledge of Sanskrit. But even this could only have been acquired by those who had access to the language. In this period, there were only two types of people who would easily have had this privilege, namely male Brahmins and ascetics. I believe that the latter were prominent in the initial stages of the formation and propagation of a wide range of Tantric cults, including those we are discussing here. In the subsequent phases of domestication and institutionalization, Brahmins played more important roles and in many places, as in the Kathmandu Valley, they became dominant. An interesting and important hybrid, which nicely combines the two, is the Brahmin renouncer. This figure, although unknown in the Kathmandu Valley at present, was immensely important in the development of all forms of Tantrism in India.

So far there is no evidence for the existence of the cult of Tripurā in the Valley at this time. The reason for this may well be simply that the cult had not yet developed sufficiently in India. Early manuscripts of Śaivasiddhānta Āgamas and Pañcarātrasaṁhitās establish that the Tantric cults of Śiva and Viṣṇu prescribed by these scriptures existed alongside their Purāṇic equivalents which drew extensively from them. These forms of Tantrism continue to be popular in South India but gave way to Kaula Tantrism in Nepal. The Bhairava Tantras, another important category of early Śaivite Tantras, are exemplified by the (now exclusively Nepalese) manuscripts of the *Brahmayāmala* and the *Śrītantrasadbhāva.* Although these texts prescribe Bhairava cults, they are replete with rituals centred on the worship of the goddesses who are Bhairava's consorts. In this and in many other respects they represent a point of transition from the earlier Śaiva to the later Śākta cults.[61] The *Jayadrathayāmala*, to which we have already referred as the root Tantra of the proto-cults of Siddhilakṣmī, considers itself to be a part of the Bhairava current.[62] And the *Śrītantrasadbhāva*, as we shall see, is an important source for the Kubjikā tradition.

[61] I do not mean to say that the cults prescribed by these texts led an exclusive existence apart from others. There always was, as there is now, overlapping of any one cult with others. Many of the cults of the Bhairava Tantras may have predated a large part of those of the Śaivasiddhānta Āgamas. The follower of one may also have been initiated into those of the other. One could say that this tendency to blend together diverse cults is the practical consequence of the radical polytheism of Hinduism as a whole. By this I mean that Hindus, like the ancient Greeks, never worship a deity alone. He or she is always accompanied by others even though, unlike the Greeks, Hindus may perceive the deity as having an ultimate, absolute identity.

[62] A typical colophon found at the end of each chapter (*paṭala*) of the *Jayadrathayāmala* reads: *iti bhairavasrotasi vidyāpīṭhe śiraśchede jayadrathayāmale mahātantre caturviṁśatisāhasre* '(this is a chapter of) the great Tantra, *Jayadrathayāmala*, (otherwise known as) the *Śiraścheda,* consisting of twenty-four thousand verses which belongs to the Seat of Knowledge of the Bhairava current'. See Dyczkowski (1987a) for a detailed discussion of the canon of the Śaiva Tantras and the classifications these works have devised for themselves. See also th important work by Sanderson (1988).

The *Śrītantrasadbhāva* is a Trika Tantra, that is to say, even though it is a Bhairava Tantra, as are all of the other Trika Tantras that are still extant or of which we know from references, it describes and gives special importance to the worship of a Triad (which is the literal meaning of the word 'Trika') of goddesses, namely, Parā (lit. Supreme), Parāparā (lit. Supreme-cum-Inferior) and Aparā (lit. Inferior), who are worshipped along with their consorts the Bhairavas Bhairavasadbhava, Ratiśekhara, and Navātman, respectively.[63] Sanderson succinctly defines the term Trika as follows:

"By the term Trika I intend an entity in ritual rather than theology. I refer to the cluster of Tantric Śaiva cults with a common system or 'pantheon' of Mantra-deities. The distinctive core of this pantheon (*yāgaḥ*) is the three goddesses Parā, Parāparā and Aparā and the two alphabet deities Śabdarāśi[-bhairava] (also called Mātṛkā[bhairava]) and Mālinī." (Sanderson 1990: 32)

Significantly Sanderson quotes a verse from a Kubjikā Tantra, the *Kularatnoddyota,* which we have already had occasion to mention above, to support his view.[64] The mantras of the three goddesses are given in the KMT,[65] while Kubjikā herself is occasionally identified with Siddhayogeśvarī, the principal goddess of the Trika system

[63] This is according to TĀ 15/323b-329b. Abhinavagupta does not tell us the source of this configuration. Kubjikā's consort is Navātman. The mantra of Navātman, according to Abhinavagupta (TĀ 30/11c-12b) is RHKṢMLVYŪṂ. The prevalent form in the Kubjikā Tantras and the one generally used in Newar rituals is HSKṢMLVRYŪṂ.

[64] *śabdarāśiś ca mālinyā vidyānāṁ tritayasya ca |*
sāṅgopāṅgasamāyuktaṁ trikatantraṁ kariṣyati |

See Sanderson 1990: 32. A translation of this important reference is found in Dyczkowski (1987a: 84). It reads:

"The Trikatantra will be constructed by the conjunction of the parts primary and secondary, of the three Vidyās along with Mālinī and Śabdarāśi."

[65] The Parā mantra according to KMT 18/30b-31 is HSRŪAUṂ. According to TĀ 30/27-28b it is SAUḤ. Abhinavagupta tells us two variant forms found in the *Triśirobhairavatantra,* namely: SHAUḤ and HSAUḤ. The mantra of Parāparā is recorded in TĀ 30/20-6a, also ibid. 16/213-6a, where the Vidyā is given in the reverse order. It consists of thirty-nine and a half syllables and is as follows:

of the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata,* one of the foremost authorities for the Kashmiri Śaiva Trika.[66] In the passage quoted below, Kubjikā is equated with the three goddesses in the form of Aghorā, Ghorā, and Ghoratarā. The *Mālinīvijayatantra,* another important authority for Kashmiri Trika Śaivites, identifies them as hosts of energies that are emitted from the Trika goddesses.[67] The passage is drawn from the *Manthānabhairavatantra* :

OṂ AGHORE HRĪḤ PARAMAGHORE HUṂ GHORARŪPE HAḤ GHORAMUKHI BHĪMABHĪṢAṆE VAMA PIBA PIBA HE RU RU RA PHAṬ HUṂ HAḤ PHAṬ

The Parāparā mantra according to KMT 18/4-24 consists of forty-two and a half syllables. It is given in the *Śabdarāśi* code in reverse order and is as follows:

AIṂ AGHORE HRĪṂ HSAḤ PARAMAGHORE HŪṂ GHORARŪPE HSAUṂ GHORAMUKHI BHĪMABHĪṢAṆE VAMA VAMA PIBA PIBA HAḤ HE RU RU RA RA HRĪṂ HRŪṂ PHAṬ

The Aparā mantra according to TĀ 30/20cd is HRĪḤ HĀṂ PHAṬ. According to KMT 18/26b it consists of seven and a half syllables and is HE PA HA RU PHA PHAṬ. KMT 18/28b-29 presents a variant (*bheda*) of the same, namely, AIṂ HRĪṂ HRĀṂ PHREṂ HĀṂ PHAṬ.

Even though all three mantras in the two sources contain significant variants, we can say for both of the first two mantras, Parā and Parāparā, what Abhinavagupta says about Aparā, namely, that "even though it is basically the same, it presents itself in various ways" (TĀ 30/28a).

[66] *devataiḥ pūjitā nityaṁ brahmacaryāparāyaṇaiḥ |*
siddhayogeśvarīkhyātāṁ śrīkujākhyāṁ namāmy aham ||

"I salute the venerable (goddess) called Kujā who is known as Siddhayogeśvarī and is perpetually worshipped by (all) the deities and by those intent on celibacy." (KuKh 5/82)

[67] *viṣayeṣv eva saṁlīnān adho 'dhaḥ pātayanty aṇūn |*
rudrāṇūn yāḥ samāliṅgya ghorataryo 'parās tu tāḥ ||
miśrakarmaphalāsaktiṁ pūrvavaj janayanti yāḥ |
muktimārganirodhinyas tāḥ syur ghorāḥ parāparāḥ ||
pūrvavaj jantujātasya śivadhāmaphalapradāḥ |
parāḥ prakathitās tajjñair aghorāḥ śivaśaktayaḥ || (MV 3/31-3)

"The Ghoratarā (energies), which are the lower (*aparā*) ones, embrace the Rudra (i.e. individual) souls. Having done so, they throw down (those) individual souls who are attached to the objects of sense to increasingly lower levels.

"I salute the venerable (goddess) called Kujā who, residing in her own Wheel, is perpetually conjoined (with the Supreme Principle), she who is Ghorā, Ghoratarā and Aghorā, and is sustained by the knowledge of Ghora." [68]

The *Śrītantrasadbhāva* is an important Trika Tantra for the monistic Śaivites of Kashmir of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Abhinavagupta, who belongs to this period, refers to it as the source of a Kaula rite of initiation taught to him by Śambhunātha.[69] Abhinavagupta refers to him as his teacher in Trika Śaivism, which Abhinavagupta used as the focus of his massive synthesis of the Tantric systems prevalent in the Kashmir of his day and which he calls, extending the usage of the term in the Tantras, Trika. The *Śrītantrasadbhāva* is the source of the particular form of the mantras for the Trika goddesses found in the KMT, which incorporates three chapters of this Tantra.[70] This inclusion indicates that the author(s) of some part at least of the KMT had access to it. This suggests that he was an initiate into this system or into a cognate one that allowed

Those who, in like manner, cause (individual souls) to be attached to the fruits of mixed (good and bad) actions and block the path to liberation are the middling (*parāparā*) (energies called) Ghorā.

Those energies of Śiva who, as before, bestow the fruits of Śiva's abode to living beings are said to be the supreme (parā) ones which those who know (call) Aghorā."

According to Abhinavagupta the three goddesses Parā, Parāparā and Aparā correspond to the powers of will, knowledge and action, respectively. They generate these three categories of energy, the Aghorā, Ghorā, and Ghoratarā, that function in these ways (see TĀ 3/71b-5a, 3/102b-4a).

[68] *ghorā ghoratarāghorā ghorajñānāvalambinī |*
nityayuktā svacakrasthā śrīkujākhyāṁ namāmy aham || (KuKh 5/79)

[69] TĀ 29/211b-2a.

[70] See the edition of the KMT by T. Goudriaan and J. A. Schoterman. Appendix V of this edition contains a survey of the significant variants between KMT chapters 4 to 6 and the *Śrītantrasadbhāva* chapters 3, 6, and 8. There are three manuscripts of the *Śrītantrasadbhāva*, all of them preserved in Nepal. They are NAK 5/445 (A.D. 1097), 1/363 and 5/1983. I have already established the priority in time of the Trika goddesses with respect to the Kubjikā Tantras in Dyczkowski 1987a: 83-85.

access to this Tantra. Moreover, this person or group of people was certainly influenced by the Trika system of this work. I have gone into this matter in some detail because it is exemplary of a general principle, namely that most, if not all, Tantric systems are built up at their origins by initiates of other systems. As initiates they would have a firm belief in the power of the most important mantras of those other systems and will therefore naturally tend to incorporate them into the new system they are building. Mantras and seed syllables have power in themselves. They enjoy the independent existence and identity of deities along with their attributes and limbs which, indeed, they are said to be. The incorporation of mantras into a system is thus equivalent to the incorporation of iconic forms. Similarly, the permutations of single mantras are equivalent to the permutations of their corresponding iconic forms.

No Tantric system discovered to date is without similar precedents. The Śaivasiddhānta incorporates in a modified form the Pāśupata iconography and mantras of five-faced Sadāśiva as a central part of its most original core.[71] Cults expounded in the Bhairava Tantras similarly draw from the Siddhānta, maintaining, in varying degrees, a connection with it. A clear example of this is the cult of Svacchandabhairava which, although a Bhairava cult, is very close to those of Sadāśiva in the Siddhāntāgamas and contains elements of Pāśupata Śaivism.[72] It appears that these layers in the formation of

[71] See Bhatt 1961: 22ff. concerning the mantras of Sadāśiva's five faces.

[72] Arraj has examined the history and structure of the *Svacchandatantra*, the root text of the Svacchandabhairava cult, at length in his doctoral dissertation (see bibliography). He discerns various strata in the history of the *Svacchandatantra*. These are: 1) *Śrauta* and *smārta* precepts and practice; 2) Rudra: Specifically, part of the *Śatarudrīya* has provided the *Bahurūpa* formula of *sakala*-Svacchandabhairava, used in the primary rituals throughout the Tantra (Arraj 1988: 31); 3) Vedic meta-ritualist and ascetic speculation. This includes meditation on *OṀ (praṇava)* and interiorized rituals focused on the vital breath; 4) Brahminical *śāstra*s: Arraj sees similarities in the implicit theory of language with Bhartṛhari. Other *śāstra*s include logic, astrology and medicine. Their presence is, however, not great; 5) Philosophical schools (*darśana*): These are, above all, Yoga and Sāṁkhya, which have had great influence on the text; 6) Epics and Purāṇas: The influence of the Purāṇas is especially felt in the formulation of cosmologies; 7) Vaiṣṇava Pañcarātra:

the cult were discerned by the Newars in their own way, leading to the esoteric identification of Paśupati with a form of Svacchandabhairava.[73]

The cults of the Bhairava Tantras included at least two species that were so strongly orientated towards the worship of goddesses that they were more Śākta (according to the later terminology) than

Its contribution may have been the modification of Sāṁkhya cosmology through the addition of Māyā in the theistic scheme of emanation; 8) Paśupata: This includes what Arraj has listed separately as 'Rudra'; 9) Śaiva: This group Arraj rightly, I believe, identifies with the Śaivasiddhānta. Arraj and Dyczkowski (1987a: 139 fn. 24) point out that Brunner-Lachaux in her lengthy notes on her translation of the *Somaśambhupaddhati* frequently refers, especially in the section dealing with initiation in part 3, to the *Svacchandatantra* and compares it at length with the statements of the Siddhāntāgamas and their commentators.

[73] Newar Kaulas worship Svacchandabhairava independently. But his most important role is as the consort of Kubjikā. He appears in this capacity in, for example, the important Bhairava fire sacrifice called *Bhairavāgniyajña*. In this context he is worshipped as Śikhāsvacchandabhairava. In this form he is the consort of Kubjikā when she is worshipped along with six goddesses who are her attendants (*dūtī*) and embodiments of the six limbs of her mantra. Apart from innumerable references in Newar liturgies, several references to this form of Svacchandabhairava have also been found in inscriptions. I am grateful to Nūtan Śarmā for pointing this out to me. Even at the initial scriptural level, when the Tantra was compiled, Svacchandabhairava served as an intermediary between the mild Sadāśiva of the Siddhānta and the fierce Bhairava of the Bhairava Tantras. Subsequently, in the course of the development of his liturgies amongst the Newars, he became the esoteric identity of Paśupati. In retrospect one could hazard to say that the identification was already an open possibility in the *Svacchandatantra*. Arraj notes a number of Pāśupata influences in the formation of the cult at the scriptural level (Arraj 1988: 40-46). Especially, important, I would say, is the close similarity in the identity of Svacchandabhairava's five faces and those of Paśupati, on the one hand, and Sadāśiva of the Siddhāntāgamas, on the other. Thus this cult, which is very important for Newar Śāktism, bridges the gap between Paśupati and Sadāśiva on one side and on the other serves as an intermediary between the Bhairava and the Kaula Tantric cults. The net result is that, as the consort of Guhyakālī who is worshipped secretly as an aspect of Kubjikā (see above, fn. 40), Paśupati is worshipped secretly as Śikhāsvacchandabhairava in conjunction with Kubjikā.

Śaiva. These were the Kālī cults and those centred on the worship of the Three Goddesses. The next step was the move into another class of Tantra and cult. These were the Kula Tantras, which distinguished themselves from all the other types of Tantra by referring to themselves as Kaula and to the others as Tāntrika collectively. The Kubjikā Tantra represents a major point of transition between these two modalities. The dictates of the cult appear in many respects to be in an intermediate and mediating phase between the two. The cult of the goddess Kubjikā is, as the Tantras of her cult tirelessly remind us, fully Kaula. Even so, they take care to recall the link with the earlier Bhairava Tantras. The goddess and her tradition is 'established in Śiva's sphere' (*śāmbhavamaṇḍalasthā*). We are frequently told that the Kubjikā cult appears at the end of the Kali age. This appeared to be such an important feature of the Kubjikā cult that the KMT named it the Paścimāmnāya, literally the 'Last (or Final) Tradition' of the Kaula cults. Even so, the initiate is admonished to respect and even worship the 'previous tradition' (*pūrvāmnāya*). This consisted, collectively, of all the earlier Kaula schools. These were believed to be the earliest ones, all of which were derived from Matsyendranātha and his six disciples. As the system developed after the redaction of the KMT, the name Paścimāmnāya remained but the word *paścima* came to be understood as meaning 'western', which is its other common meaning. This was facilitated by the development of the parallel Kālī cult which referred to itself as the Uttarāmnāya — lit. 'Northern Tradition' or 'Higher Tradition' — possibly because it did, in reality, develop in the North of India, specifically in Kashmir and the neighbouring Himalayas. As the Paścimāmnāya developed it came to incorporate Kālī to increasing, albeit moderate, degrees.[74] However, this element, along with the addition, at a still later period, of Tripurā cults,[75] does not form a part of the essential core of the system.

[74] We have already observed the manner in which the KMT colonized the cult of Guhyakālī. Also, see below.

[75] The goddess Kāmeśvarī is known to the KMT. She is said to reside in Kāmarūpa where Kubjikā meets her in her colonizing tour of the Indian subcontinent described in chapter 2. The following is a summary of the relevant passage. The goddess goes to a place called Kāmika. There is a river there called Ucchuṣmā which is in the forest of Mahocchuṣma. There is a lake

The form Tantrism has assumed amongst the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley is deeply relevant to our enquiry, not only because Kubjikā, who is the prime focus of this essay, has been made central and fundamental to the whole of Newar Śāktism, but because Newar Śāktism is a direct (although, of course, not the only possible) historical development of processes of synthesis and syncretism that were already at work in the development of the Tantras and their cults. In the rest of this paper I will examine some features of the exchanges, mutual influences, common forms, and specific identities of these cults in relation to one another and individually that characterize these processes at work in the Tantras. The relationship the texts have with their living social, political, anthropological and cultural contexts — what they contribute to them and what they draw

there with the same name together with another one called Nīla. The goddess delights on both sides of the banks (of these lakes?). Again the goddess (Kubjikā), whose limbs are the universe and the principles of existence, sees a goddess there who is "proud with the pleasure of passion (*kāma*) and burning with the Lord of Love (*vasantatilaka*). She is melting and melts the three worlds with (her) desire." Seeing her the Mother smiles and asks her who she is and how she has come there. She calls her "passionate one" and is pleased with her for having shown her all these wonderful things. She tells her that she should be called Kāmeśvarī because in this way she has obtained the fruit of the bliss of passion. Out of compassion the form of passion (*kāmarūpa*) has been fashioned before her and so this great sacred seat (where the goddess Kāmeśvarī resides) which is called *Kāmarūpa* will come into existence during the Kali Age. Her consort will be Candrānanda. He will be seated on the shoulders of the Wind. Passionate, he will be Kāmadeva (KMT 2/82-94). The Tripurā cult has incorporated the identification of Kāmeśvarī with the early prototype of Tripurā so well that most initiates into the Tripurā cult would not be able to distinguish the two. The relative antiquity of the Kubjikā cult with repect to that of Tripurā is, I believe, well exemplified by the appearance of Kāmeśvarī in this passage with no reference either here or elsewhere to Tripurā, her later, developed form. The consistent silence throughout the later Kubjikā Tantras becomes strikingly eloquent when we notice the appearance of rituals centred on Tripurā, in the form of Tripurābhairavī, in the *Yogakhaṇḍa* of the *Manthānabhairavatantra*. Tripurā appears also in the CMSS, a relatively late Kubjikā Tantra, as the goddess of the Southern Tradition (*dakṣiṇāmnāya*) where her identity with Kāmeśvarī is evident (see Dyczkowski 1987a: 71).

from them — will be examined elsewhere. Suffice it to say that we observe similar, if not the same principles operating in both dimensions, namely, the ideal one of the texts and the empirical one of their human contexts. We notice, for example, in both cases an attempt to furnish the cult of each deity with everything that is neccessary to render it complete. Theoretically this should make it independent of all the others. But this is never the case either in the texts themselves or in their application. Indeed, in order to achieve this 'completeness' each cult assimilates elements from others. Even its most 'original' specific and specifying core is itself as much a product of a long historical process as is the uniqueness of its moment of creation. But this is not felt to be an opressive contingency; rather this continuity with the past is considered to be a mark of authenticity and authority.

Concretely, in the case of the goddess Kubjikā, we observe that in some respects she has peculiar characteristics and traits which are virtually unique to her, while in others, she embodies many of the common characteristics of all the great goddesses of Hinduism. It is above all this fact, more even than the extent of her scriptural sources, which qualifies Kubjikā to be considered a great goddess — a Mahādevī — despite her extreme obscurity to the rest of Hinduism or, indeed, Hindu Tantrism in India. Thus, like all the great goddesses of Hinduism, of which the popular, Purāṇic goddess Durgā is the prime archetype,[76] Kubjikā incorporates into herself many other

[76] Coburn writes concerning the *Devīmāhātmya,* well known as the source of the myth of origin of the goddess Durgā:

"Of the various features of the *Devīmāhātmya,* one stands preeminent. The ultimate reality in the universe is here understood to be feminine: Devī, the goddess. Moreover, the *Devīmāhātmya* appears to be the first Sanskrit text to provide a comprehensive — indeed, well-nigh relentless — articulation of such a vision. From the time of the *Ṛgveda* onwards, of course, various goddesses had figured in the Sanskrit tradition. But never before had ultimate reality itself been understood as Goddess." (Coburn 1998: 32)

Durgā became the Sanskritic representation of many popular, local and regional goddesses throughout India and has served for centuries as the public form of the secret lineage Kaula goddesses of the Newars and of Kaula goddesses throughout India. Durgā, or, more precisely, Mahiṣāsuramardinī, the Slayer of the Buffalo Demon, is indubitably a prime archetype in this sense also.

goddesses,[77] Kubjikā is an exclusively Kaula Tantric goddess and the Tantras, especially the early ones, are only secondarily concerned with myths. Thus although the Kubjikā Tantras do contain myths recounting the origin of the goddess Kubjikā, there is no specific myth in her case which accounts for the process whereby she includes other goddesses into herself as there is for the Purāṇic goddess Durgā. Even so, we can observe the results of this synthesis in her rituals, mantras, maṇḍala, and her visualized forms. Accordingly, Kubjikā is both a unique goddess and is exemplary in many respects of the other great Kaula Tantric goddesses, especially Tripurā and Kālī.

Moreover, just as Kubjikā's external form is unique to herself, despite its composite nature, the same is true of her inner nature, that is, her metaphysical identity. Kubjikā, like all the other great goddesses of the Kaula and Bhairava Tantras, is essentially the energy of universal, absolute consciousness (*cicchakti*) by means of which it does and is all things. Accordingly, Kubjikā is said to be both creative and destructive.[78] Even so, she is predominantly concerned with emanation (*sṛṣṭipradhāna*). Her cult can thus be contrasted with that of Kālī, which is predominantly concerned with withdrawal (*saṁhārapradhāna*). Even so, the spheres of manifestation are the domains of both deities. The rituals of both goddesses represent both processes. But Kubjikā, in several of her forms, is visualized, like Tripurā, as a young 'erotic' goddess (see Dyczkowski: 1996), symbolizing her fertile creativity. Kālī, on the contrary, is fierce, thus symbolizing the reverse. Even so, both types are essentially concerned with creation, and this is symbolized by their occasional portrayal in sexual union with their male counterparts.

[77] For example, in one place the goddess declares:
ahaṁ śūnyasvarūpeṇa parā divyatanur hy aham ||
ahaṁ sā mālinīdevī ahaṁ sā siddhayoginī |
ahaṁ sā kālikā kācit kulayāgeśvarī hy aham ||
ahaṁ sā carcikādevī kubjikāhaṁ ca ṣaḍvidhā |

"As my nature is the Void, I am the Supreme goddess (Parā) and my body is divine. I am that goddess Mālinī, I am Siddhayoginī. I am that certain (inscrutable — *kācit* — goddess) Kālikā. I am indeed the mistress of the Kula sacrifice (kulayāgeśvarī). I am that goddess Carcikā, I am Kubjikā who is six-fold." (KuKh 3/70-71)

[78] *maṇḍalānte sthitā nityaṁ sṛṣṭisaṁhārakārikā* | (Ibid. 2/3ab)

Kubjikā, as we shall see in the passage quoted below, feels shy at the prospect of her coupling even though this takes place as the necessary corollary of her marriage to the god. Kālī, on the other hand, sits on top of her partner, who is reduced to such passivity by the fury of her passion that he can be variously portrayed as Śiva in some iconic forms or as a corpse (*śava*) in others. Referring to the earthly counterparts of these divine couples, namely, the Siddha and his Tantric consort, the Yoginī, the Tantras distinguish between these two types of coupling by calling them 'pleasing union' (*priyamelāpa*) and 'violent union' (*haṭhamelāpa*), respectively. The former generates the lineage of accomplished adepts (*siddha*) and the world of sacred places in which they reside. Like a witch who sucks out the vitality of the unwary male,[79] the latter withdraws the ignorance which normally impels the corpse-like Śiva locked in 'reverse intercourse' below to be active and 'on top' 'churning' his energies into a dynamic active state. The special intensity and fertility of Kubjikā, whose name literally means 'Humpback Lady', is further expressed by the transgressive image of the solitary[80] goddess bent double in order to lick her own vulva. Thus she makes herself blissful freely and independently and is so fertile that she can generate the impregnating sperm with which she herself is to generate the universe.[81]

[79] On the subject of witches — called in various parts of India by such names as Ḍākinī, Ḍāyan, Ḍajan, Den, Dhakunī, Ceṭakī and Śākinī — see Herrmann-Pfandt (1996) who explains that "a husband of a human Ḍākinī has to cope with the danger of being sucked out or being brought to death through certain sickness" (ibid. p. 49).

[80] Kubjikā is not usually portrayed in this way as a solitary goddess (*ekavīrā*), although there are prescriptions in the Tantras for her worship in this form. In a passage quoted below we find another reason for her bent condition in relation to her union with her consort, in which she is portrayed in her much more common coupled condition (*yāmalabhāva*). As usual, marriage and conjunction with the god tames the goddess even as it deprives her of her independence. Thus, in that situation, she is not in an uroboric state of self-regeneration but is generated from the god.

[81] This aspect is evident in one of her common names, i.e. Śukrādevī, which means literally the 'Goddess Sperm'. Similarly, in a verse which is a part of the so-called *Saṁvartāsūtra* (ṢaṭSS 1/1 and KuKh 1/1), which Newar initiates frequently recite in the course of their rituals to invoke Kubjikā (*āvāhana*), she

But although both goddesses are represented in the context of their own special symbolism as independant and, hence, complete in themselves, both processes, which they respectively govern, must go together. Indeed, they are two aspects of a single process. In terms of the psychology of their symbolism only implicitly expressed in the texts, Kālī is the radiantly Dark Goddess of light who is the shadow-like counterpart of the shining light blue [82] Kubjikā. Thus they are distinguished, even as they are integrated, both by the discerning consciousness of the renouncer yogi and by the power of the symbolism of the householder's ritual action.

Thus, Kubjikā maintains her dominantly creative role, even when she is represented in her destructive mode and identified with Kālī.[83] In this aspect she functions like Kālī who gathers together the energies of manifestation and consumes them into her own essential nature, their radiant source. The Kālī Tantras constantly represent their goddesses in this destructive mode, just as the Kubjikā Tantras stress that Kubjikā is the embodiment of the god's primal intention to create the universe which, created in a series of graded emanations impelled by this intention, adorns her body.

is said to be the goddess whose 'menses is sperm' (*bindupuṣpā*). This appellation not only symbolizes in a striking manner her androgynous nature (for which see chapter above) but also her powerful and independent fertility.

[82] Kubjikā is said to be light blue 'like a cannabis flower' (*atasīpuṣpasaṁkāśā*) as is her maṇḍala, the Saṁvartāmaṇḍala.

[83] The root Tantra of the Kubjikā cult, the *Kubjikāmata*, hardly refers to the goddess Kālī. Even so the connection between the two goddesses is clearly established from the beginning of the Tantra. The god Himavat has just praised the god Bhairava who has come to visit him in the hermitage in the Himalayas. Bhairava is pleased with Himavat's devotion and offers him five boons. In response to these favours, Himavat offers Bhairava his daughter whom he introduces as the young virgin (*kumārikā*) Kālikā. We come to know that she was Umā in a previous life and that she is ultimately Kubjikā. In the later *Manthānabhairavatantra* she is called Bhadrakālikā. If the Newar Kaula initiates of Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley were to study this Tantra they would certainly see in this textual identification a sign that Bhadrakālī, whom the citizens venerate as the founder of their town, is secretly Kubjikā. For an account of the role Bhadrakālī played in helping Ānanda Malla to found Bhaktapur see Levy 1992: 487ff.

Let us see what the texts themselves say. The first set of passages concern the goddess Kālī. They are drawn from the *Mahānayaprakāśa*, an important, unpublished text [84] of the Kashmiri *Kālīkrama* by Arṇasiṁha, who belonged to the later part of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century.

"Extremely voracious, the network of (Kālī's) rays transcends both process (*krama*) and its absence. Abodeless and waveless, it is beyond the plane of both contact (with phenomena) and its absence. Thus there is nothing higher. This, the undistorted light of the one glorious energy of perfectly tranquil (consciousness), abides intent upon consuming its own (cosmic) nature." [85]

Again:

"This same (goddess Kālī) is the Devourer of Withdrawal (*saṁhārabhakṣaṇī*). (This aspect of the goddess is) generated to relish the juice of the aesthetic delight (of objectivity inwardly digested). Endowed with the innermost consciousness of one's own nature, She is therefore well established and free (of all outer) support." [86]

Again:

"The wise say that that is the eternal process called withdrawal (*saṁhāra*). It is the arising of the outpouring of the rays of that great, unconditioned consciousness which, said to be free of the darkness of both being and non-being, is intent on consuming (all things)." [87]

[84] This short tract of about three hundred verses is one of a number of such short tracts collected in a manuscript preserved in the National Archives in Kathmandu. The manuscript is wrongly labelled *Kālīkulapañcaśatikā* (see bibliography). Prof. Sanderson gave me a copy of the entire manuscript in 1981. I am grateful to him for supplying me with this material. Almost twenty years have elapsed since he gave it to me. To the best of my knowledge he has not published this text nor is he about to do so. I have therefore taken the liberty of making use of this important material myself.

[85] *kramākramobhayottīrṇaraśmipuñjātighasmaraḥ* ||
svarūpaṁ hartum udyukto nistaraṅgo 'niketanaḥ |
sparśāsparśapadātītarūpatvād vigatottaraḥ ||
praśāntātipraśāntaikamahimāvikṛtaprabhaḥ | (MNP 222cd-4ab)

[86] *saṁhārabhakṣaṇī saiva rasasaṁcarvaṇotthitā* |
svarūpaprāntacitvattaḥ samārūḍhā nirāśrayā || (Ibid. 29)

[87] *tadbhakṣaṇaḥ paraḥ prokto bhāvābhāvatamojjhitaḥ* ||
nirupādhimahābodharaśmyullāsamayodayaḥ |
etad evocyate sadbhiḥ saṁhārākhyo 'vyayakramaḥ || (Ibid. 204cd - 5)

The following passage is drawn from a Kubjikā Tantra, namely, the *Kularatnoddyota* to which I have already had occasion to refer. The Tantra describes the origin of the goddess Kubjikā as an embodiment of the creative desire (*icchā*) of the god Bhairava. Note how, even though she is the main deity, she is said to be the god's attendant as would befit a pious Hindu wife. But even so, the universe is generated from them by means of a union that is necessarily incestuous: [88]

"The will, inherent in the essential nature of the transcendent, imperceptible, supreme and supremely blissful Lord, shone forth (*babhau*). God, aroused by his own will, fashioned a supreme body (*vapu*) (for himself). That (body) possessed every limb and was endowed with the previously (stated) attributes (of deity). Shining like billions of moons, it (was) an immense and marvellous mass of energy. The great lord, the venerable Kubjeśa, accompanied by the encompassing attendants (*āvaraṇa*) of the Śrīkrama (the tradition of the goddess Kubjikā), sat on the seat of the Wheel of Knowledge, adorned with the garland of Principles of Existence (*tattva*). The Lord of the gods, whose nature is beyond conception comtemplated his own imperishable, and sacred (*bhāvita*) nature, (the Self) of the venerable Wheel of Bliss.

"Free of objectivity and residing in his own foundation (*ādhāra*), (he contemplated himself) in order to fashion the wheel called (the Wheel of) Bliss. Thus, O fair lady, as he contemplated himself, billions of aeons passed for (the god who) abides in the aloof reality (*kaivalyārtha*) (of transcendence). Then, the benefactor of the universe, for the benefit of (his) attendants (*praticāraka*), conceived the thought which is supreme Nirvāṇa, namely: 'Who is our attendant?'

[88] Compare this relationship with the one Kālī — the goddess of Time — has with her consort, Bhairava Mahākāla (the Great Time). Bhairava represents the vital breath (*prāṇa*). Its movement impels the motion of the mind and, with it, the flux of time. Kālī is the divine consciousness who, intent on consuming the energies of manifestation that arise out of her own nature, absorbs the vital breath and with it time into her eternal nature (MP p. 7). Thus, far from being the god's pious bashful attendant, she devours him! When we couple this perception of the goddess with Rāmakṛṣṇa's vision of the divine mother Kālī devouring the children to whom she has just given birth, the reversal of perspective is virtually complete.

"Abiding thus for a moment, he applied (his) mind (*manas*) to his own foundation (*svādhiṣṭhāna*).[89] (Thus) he aroused (his) supreme power whose form was coiled. Fire came forth by the left hand path in the Sky, which is both supreme (transcendent) and inferior (immanent). (Thus) the Supreme Lord, who is the supreme (reality), emanated (*sṛṣṭavān*) the supreme goddess. O beloved, that goddess was Mahāmāyā,[90] endowed with his (own divine) attributes. Endowed with the attributes of the Supreme Lord, she was delighted with supreme bliss.

"My Wheel called Bliss (said the Lord) is fashioned by means of both of them. (Thus) created, the supremely divine (goddess) was endowed with the twenty-five qualities (of the principles of exist-

[89] One of the major contributions that the Kubjikā cult has made to Śākta Tantrism as a whole is the well-known system of Six Wheels (*ṣaṭcakra*) visualized in the body as stations of the ascent of Kuṇḍalinī. Kubjikā is Kuṇḍalinī bent over in the form of a sleeping snake coiled in the first of these Wheels called *mulādhāra* — the Root Foundation. In this case, the energy within the body of Kujeśa is not in this Wheel, which is located in the base of the genitals, but in the second Wheel along, namely *Svādhiṣṭhāna* — the Wheel of the Self-Supported. In this context, the collocation of this energy here is appropriate. The Wheel of the Self-Supported is the place where the erect penis makes contact with the cervix at the base of the womb during sexual intercourse. Thus this Wheel is the centre of the first point of contact in the union of Śiva and Śakti from which the emission (*visarga*) that generates the universe originates.

But although this makes sense, even so, given the prestige of the Six Wheel system in the Kubjikā Tantras, which is at the very core of the cult, one wonders at the anomalous role of this Wheel here. Is it a hangover from an earlier formulation of the Six Wheels when there were only five?

[90] The Tantra appears to imply that Kubjikā, as Mahāmāyā, should be identified with Durgā, the foremost public representation of the Great Goddess. Newar initiates into Kubjikā's cult stress how Kubjikā is preeminent amongst all the great goddesses of Newar Śāktism because she is Mahāmāyā in a more direct, original sense than the other goddesses, even though they are also all identified with Durgā (as Mahiṣāsuramardinī — the Slayer of the Buffalo Demon), who acts as their public exoteric form.

ence) and, residing in the twenty-five principles of existence,[91] the Supreme Goddess was beautiful.

"Energized by the (mantras called the) Five Jewels, enveloped by the seven bodily constituents (*dhātu*), her nature the wine (*sudhā*) (that inebriates her consort) and divine, she is coloured with the colour of the principles of existence (*tattva*). That goddess is (the god's) own will, Bhairavī, (who is in the company) of the God of the gods." [92]

[91] We notice here that the usual thirty-six principles found in the Śaiva Tantras and at times also recognized in the Kubjikā Tantras, have in this passage been reduced to the more basic Sāṁkhya set of twenty-five plus one, if we include the goddess herself. The Kubjikā Tantras occasionally identify the goddess with Nature (*prakṛti*), which is an identification found in the Purāṇas and in the later Śākta Tantras. When this identification is made, Śiva figures as the Person (*puruṣa*), who is not just the individual soul of the Sāṁkhya who goes by the same name, but the divine male counterpart of the goddess. The number of principles in such cases is then usually about twenty-five to twenty-eight, varying in detail according to the particular text and its cult. Is the setup in the Kubjikā cult of the *Kularatnoddyota* a first step towards the later conceptions or an archaic remnant of an earlier pre-Tantric theistic Sāṁkhya?

[92] The original readings in the two manuscripts I have collated are noted in square brackets. These are: MS K, which is CSS MS no. C 348 - Bodlein Oxford and MS Kh which is NAK MS no. 1/1653 = NGMPP reel no. B 119/3.

atītasyāprameyasya [*k: atītasya-*] *parasya parameṣṭhinaḥ* |
paramānandayuktasya icchā svābhāvakī babhau ||
svecchayā kṣubhito [*kh: kuṁbhito*] *devaḥ* [*k kh: deva*] *sa*
cakāra [*k: sa cakārā; kh: saṁkānā*] *paraṁ vapu* [*k kh: vapuḥ*] |
tac ca pūrvaguṇair yuktaṁ [*kh: pūrvasturṇair yyuktaṁ*]
samagrāvayavānvitaṁ [*k: samamrā-; kh: samamrāvayavānvitaṁḥ*] ||
candrakoṭyarbudābhāsaṁ [*kh: candrakopya-*] *tejorāśir mahadbhutam* [*k: tejorāsi-; kh: tejośaṁsi-*] |
jñānacakrāsanāsīnaṁ [*kh: -sanāsīna*] *tattvamālāvibhūṣitam* ||
śrīkramāvaraṇopetaṁ [*k: -caraṇopetaṁ; kh: -caraṇopeta*] *śrīkujeśaṁ mahāprabhu* |
śrīmadānandacakrasya bhāvitātmānam avyayam [*kh: savitātmanamavyayaṁ*]||
acintyātmā sa [*k: acintayatsa; kh: acintayatma*] *deveśaḥ* [*k: deveśā; kh: deveśau*] *cakramānandasaṁjñakam* |
kartuṁ [*k: kartaṁ; kh: karta*] *devo 'prameyātmā* [*k kh: devya-*] *svakīyādhārasaṁsthitaḥ* ||
evam acintayat svayaṁ [*k kh: evaṁ cintaya tastasye*] *kalpakoṭyarbudāni* [*kh: asya kalpakoṭya-*] *ca* |

The text goes on to say that the god fashioned a skull-bowl filled with the energy of the goddess in the form of wine (*surā*) with which he offered libations to himself and his attendants. The goddess is surprised by how the god can worship himself in this way through his own blissful power represented by the wine. Accordingly, she wants to know more about this internal rite of adoration through which, as the Tantra goes on to explain, the universe is created. Thus Bhairava, here called Śrīnātha — the Lord of the goddess Śrī, that is, Kubjikā — continues:

"The goddess was established with devotion in the worship of the Beginningless Liturgy (*anādikrama*). Both of them were seated there and, in the union (*melaka*) of supreme bliss, the venerable lord of Kula instituted (their) marriage (*pāṇigrahaṇa*).

"Now the goddess was troubled (āśaṅkitā) and her body was bent with shyness (*lajjā*). (Thus her) form as the 'crooked one' (*kubjikā*) came into being with (its) subtle, crooked limp (*kiñcitkhañjāgati*)[93] but even then, the lord, blooming with joy, took the hand of the goddess and sat her on his lap."

atītāni varārohe kaivalyārthasthitasya [kh: kaivalyārthai-] ca ||
athākaroj jagaddhātā praticārakahetave [kh: -hetava] |
cintāṁ [k kh: cintā] paramanirvāṇaṁ [k kh: -nirvāṇaḥ] ko 'smākaṁ praticārakaḥ||
iti sthitvā muhūrtaṁ [k: -rthaṁ; kh: mudruttaṁ] vai [k: se; kh: me] svādhiṣṭhāne [kh: -sthāne] mano dadhau |
kṣobhayet [k kh: -yat] paramāṁ [kh: paramā] śaktiṁ kuṇḍalākāravigrahām [k kh: -kālavigrahāṁ]||
niṣkrāmya vāmamārgeṇa bahir vyomni [kh: vahi-] parāpare [kh: -para] |
sṛṣṭavān [k: -vāt] paramāṁ devīṁ [kh: devī] saparaḥ [k kh: parāṁ] parameśvaraḥ||
sā c a devī mahāmāyā priye taddharmadharmiṇī |
parameśaguṇair yuktā paramānandananditā ||
tābhyāṁ taṁ tu mamārabdaṁ cakram ānandasaṁjñakam |
nirmitā paramā divyā pañcaviṁśaguṇair yutā ||
pañcaviṁśatitattvasthā [kh: -tatvaiśca] śobhitā [k kh: śobhitāṁ] parameśvarī [k kh: -rīṁ] |
pañcaratnakṛtāṭopā saptadhātuparicchadā [k kh: -dāṁ] ||
sudhāsvarūpiṇī [k kh: sudhāturūpiṇī] divyā [k kh: divyāṁ] tattvarāgānurañjitā [k kh: -tāṁ] |
svakīyecchā ca [k kh: svakīyaśira] sā [k kh: so] devī [k kh: devi] devadevena [kh: bhedavadevana] bhairavī [k kh: bhairavi] || (KRU 1/53-65)

[93] The goddess, identified, as we have already noted, with Kuṇḍalinī, is called the Lady with a Limp (Khañjinī) when she moves up through the Wheels of the god's body, halting for a moment as she pierces through each one.

"That is said to be the union of Śiva and Śakti. There, O goddess, they are also churned together as befits (*saṁparipadyataḥ*) (the act of union). There, O dear one, the male seed and mensis (*rajas*), the vital essence (*dhātu* of the god and the goddess) are mixed together.

"The great and immortal Drop (*mahābindu*) originated there, O fair-faced one. Energized and shining, (it shone with the) light of tens of millions of suns." [94]

The Tantra goes on to describe how the Drop bursts apart and the universe is generated from it step by step in a series of emanations that range down to the physical world and its inhabitants.

Kālī thus creates oneness in, and through, the destruction of multiplicity. Conversely, Kubjikā destroys, as it were, the primordial unity of the original solitary god, through the activity which brings about creation. But even though such distinctions can be discerned in the texts, and they themselves also make them, the two cults share basic, common goals. These include a vast range of benefits collectively referred to as accomplishments — *siddhi* — consisting of an amazing number of magical and yogic powers. Alongside these mundane aims, we find soteriological ones concerned with liberation (*mukti*). This is portrayed variously as a positive, permanently blissful condition and/or as the ultimate condition resulting from the extinction of all suffering and contingency called Nirvāṇa. According to the Kubjikā Tantras, the source and essence of this extinction is

[94] *anādikramapūjāyāṁ bhaktyā devī* [*k kh: devi*] *niveśitā* ||
tābhyāṁ tatropaviṣṭābhyāṁ paramānandamelake [*kh: -melakaṁ*] |
pāṇigrahaṇasaṁyogaṁ [*kh: pānigrahana-*] *kṛtavān śrīkuleśvaraḥ* ||
athaivāśaṅkitā [*kh: āvāṁ-*] *devī lajjayākuñcitātanuḥ* [*kh: natuḥ*] |
saṁjātaṁ kubjikārūpaṁ khañjāgatiyutam [*kh: khaṁjāgatiryyagaṁ*] ||
tathāpi tena devena harṣautphullayutena tu |
sā devī gṛhya hastaṁ [*k kh: haste*] *tu svotsaṅge sanniveśitā* [*k kh: ma-*] ||
śivaśaktisamāyogaḥ [*kh: -yogaṁ*] *sa eva parikīrtitaḥ* |
tatrāpi mathanaṁ devi tayoḥ saṁparipadyataḥ ||
tatra bījarajodhātoḥ [*kh: dhāto*] *saṁmiśritvaṁ bhavet* [*k: saṁmiśritvabhavat; kh: saḍyiśretvabhava*] *priye* |
tatrotpanno [*kh: tatrojñā*] *mahābindur amṛto yo* [*kh: yā*] *varānane* ||
dīptivān bhāsvaraś caiva [*kh: dīptivārtāsvara-*] *sūryakoṭisamaprabhaḥ* [*k kh: -prabhuḥ*] | (KRU 1/73cd-9ab)

the goddess Kubjikā herself. She is the Void (*vyoman, kha, ākāśa*) of the energy of th Transmental (*unmanī*).[95] This energy moves up perpetually into the highest sphere of absolute being which this school calls 'Śiva's maṇḍala' (*śāmbhavamaṇḍala*), reminding us of the close association between the Śaiva and the Śākta Tantras. She then flows down from it into the spheres of her emanations, while she continues to reside within it. As the goddess behaves in this way, she is called Śāmbhavīśakti and Rudraśakti.[96] Both of these names for the supreme

[95] Like other major deities of various Tantric traditions, including Śiva and even Viṣṇu, Kālī is identified with the Void of consciousness. But her special domain is, as her very name suggests, time (*kāla*). Abhinavagupta explains in his *Tantrāloka*:

"Again, time (can be experienced) both as a succession (*krama* of moments) as well (as eternal time) free of succession. Both aspects abide entirely within consciousness. Thus scripture affirms that Kālī (the Goddess of Time) is the Lord's supreme power. It is that same power which, by its spontaneous development (*praroha*), manifests outside consciousness the succession and its absence, encompassed within its own nature, and so abides as the (life-giving) activity of the vital breath (*prāṇavṛtti*).

Consciousness alone, very pure and of the nature of light, severing objectivity from itself, manifests as the sky void of all things. That is said to be the voidness of consciousness and is the supreme state yogins attain by reflecting on objectivized manifestation with an attitude of negation (*neti neti*).

This same void Self (*khātman*) is called the vital breath, the throb (*spanda*) and wave (*ūrmi*) of consciousness. By virtue of its inherent inner outpouring (*samucchalatva*), it falls upon the objectivity (which it) separated from (itself) with the intention of taking possession of it." (TĀ 6/6-11)

The identification of the goddess with the energy of the Transmental (*unmanī*) is also not unique to the Kubjikā Tantras. The Āgamas (i.e. Tantras) of the Śaivasiddhānta regularly prescribe the worship of Śiva's consort as the power of the Transmental. As in the Kubjikā Tantras, Śiva's consort in such Tantric texts is also understood to be the intermediary between the spheres of emanation, which are within the purview of the mind, and the transcendent above them; beyond mind. But whereas this conception figures occasionally in these types of Tantric text, it assumes a central role in the theology of the goddess Kubjikā.

[96] *rudraśaktiḥ sadā pūjyā pīṭhānāṁ kīrtanād api |*
siddhiṁ sphuṭā pradātārī śrīkujākhyāṁ nāmāmy aham ||

"I salute the venerable (goddess) called Kujā who, clearly apparent, bestows accomplishment, she who is to be constantly worshipped as Rudra's energy and by praising the sacred seats (in which she resides)." (KuKh 5/81)

energy of consciousness are also common in the Tantras respected in the Kashmiri Śaiva tradition.[97]

In her creative aspect Kubjikā is especially identified with the energy of bliss which resides in the centre of the maṇḍala and the body. It is said to be the absolute itself, which is called the 'Neuter'. Beyond the male Śiva and the female Śakti,[98] it is their source within which they fuse into one. This energy of bliss in its primary, unmanifest state pervades the Void of consciousness.[99] At the same time, in its active manifest form, it is the triple energy (*triśakti*)[100] of

[97] For example, see MV 1/44cd-5:

ajñānena sahaikatvaṁ kasyacid vinivartate ||
rudraśaktisamāviṣṭaḥ sa yiyāsuḥ śivecchayā |
bhuktimuktiprasiddhyarthaṁ nīyate sadguruṁ prati ||

"(It may happen) that the unity a person has with (the condition of) ignorance ceases. (Such a one) is penetrated by Rudra's energy. By Śiva's will, he desires to go to a true teacher and is led (to one) so that he can attain liberation and (worldly) enjoyment."

Abhinavagupta considers this passage, and the correct understanding of the function of Rudraśakti, important enough to quote and comment on it twice in his *Tantrāloka* (see TĀ 4/33-5 and 13/199-203).

[98] The *Kumārikākhaṇḍa* of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* declares that: "It is neither female nor is its form male, that bliss is the Neuter (absolute)." *(na strī na puruṣākāraṁ ānandaṁ taṁ napuṁsakam* | KuKh 3/46ab). The goddess, who is the power of bliss (*ānandaśakti*), is accordingly called Napuṁsakā — the Female Eunuch. To the best of my knowledge this name is exclusive to the goddess Kubjikā. Apart from this usage in the literature of the Kubjikā cult, this is certainly a very rare, if not unique, form of the neuter noun *napuṁsakam.*

[99] *khastham nivartitākāraṁ avyaktaṁ bhairavātmakam* |
evam ānandaśaktis tu divyaliṅgā kramoditā ||

"Located in the Sky (of consciousness), its form has been completed (to perfection — *nivartita*) and, unmanifest, it is Bhairava. In the same way, the power of bliss is the divine (female) Liṅgā (*divyaliṅgā*) that has emerged from the sequence (*krama* — of the lineage and the liturgy)." (KuKh 3/47)

[100] These three energies are a standard set found not only in the Tantras but also in Purāṇic representations of Śiva's energies. The triad is well known to the worshippers of the goddess Durgā as the three goddesses who are the consorts of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. They represent the three qualities (*guṇa*) of Nature (*prakṛti*) with which the goddess Durgā is identified. Newar Kaula initiates also link their conception of these three energies with the qualities,

will, knowledge and action. Together these energies constitute Kubjikā's nature as the generative Yoni (vulva).[101] The seed of the Yoni is the goddess's divine Command (*ājñā*) symbolically situated in the centre of the triangle of the Yoni, the goddess's maṇḍala. Through this energy the world is created, and through it one attains the authority (*adhikāra*) to perform Tantric and Kaula rituals, initiate others and ultimately lead them to the same realization.[102] The *Tantra of the Churning Bhairava* (*Manthānabhairavtantra*) tells us:

"In the centre (of the maṇḍala) is the Place of Repose; it is the expansion (of emanation — *prasara*) and the experience (of ultimate reality), the understanding of which is one's own (spiritual) authority."[103]

representing this association by the respective colours of their three goddesses, who are the black Guhyakālī, the red Kāmeśvarī, and Siddhilakṣmī who is white. Two pictures of this triad can be viewed in the museum in Bhaktapur. Note the conspicuous absence of Kubjikā in this triad. This is because she is identified with Mahāmāyā, which is Nature (*prakṛti*), their original source. Thus she is present there, in a sense, as all three. Or, to put it another way, she is their basic absolute and hence unmanifest, secret identity.

[101] *yā sā śaktir bhagākhyātā śambhor utsaṅgagāminī |*
kaulinī brahmacaryeṇa śrīmān devī napuṁsakā ||
"The energy called the Vulva (*bhaga*) who sits on Śambhu's lap is, by virtue of (her) continence, Kaulinī, the venerable goddess Neuter (*napuṁsakā*). (KuKh 3/63)"

The Sanskrit of these texts is not infrequently deviant. Here is a particularly interesting example of how deviant Sanskrit can be employed with a meaningful purpose. The expression *'śrīmān devī napuṁsakā'* combines an irregular masculine form of address (*'śrīmān'*) and, as we have already noted, the peculiar transformation of a neuter noun into a feminine adjectival name (*napuṁsakā*), both with reference to the goddess, to represent her multivalent nature. Other cases of deviant Sanskrit have not, and will not, be noted here.

[102] This interesting and original concept, reminiscent in some ways of the Tantric Buddhist conception of *Bodhicitta*, 'Mind of Enlightenment', is dealt with extensively solely in the Kubjikā Tantras. All beings whatever their status, gods, men or demons, have spiritual authority because they have received the Command (*ājñā*) of the goddess Kubjikā. This Command permits them to exert this authority within their jurisdiction. This doctrine may well have served to justify the configuration of Newar Kaula Tantrism around this goddess in the radical manner in which it is at present.

[103] *madhye viśrāmabhūmiṁ prasaram anubhavaṁ pratyayaṁ svādhikāram* || (KuKh 1/3c)

This same energy is also in the centre of the body, that is, between the two vital breaths of inhalation and exhalation. There, Kubjikā abides in the fullness of her ambivalence. Blissful in the transcendent beyond worldly pleasure and its consequent pain, she is horrifying in her alluring beauty as the universal activity of time in her manifest universe:

"It is said that the power of bliss is merged between the inhaled (*prāṇa*) and exhaled breath (*apāna*). Located in the middle of the Stick of the Cavity of Space (i.e. *suṣumnā*), she pervades the energy of the consciousness of the individual soul.

"Slender, her limbs variegated by time (*kāla*) and moment (*velā*), she awakens (the initiate) to (ultimate) reality. Merged in the plane (of Śiva), the Bliss of Stillness (*nirānanda*), she is supreme, imperishable and horrific." [104]

"It is supreme bliss and, as such, is the eternal bliss that is the final end (of all existence). Tranquil, it is the Bliss of Stillness (*nirānanda*). Free of the eight causes (that constitute the subtle body), it is free of the qualities (*guṇa*) and principles (*tattva*) and devoid of both that which is to be taken up and abandoned." [105]

As emanation itself, Kubjikā is the maṇḍala. This maṇḍala is primarily the triangle of the Yoni. This is why the goddess is called Vakrā — Crooked. We have seen that this basic triangular form has four components located at the three corners and the centre. These are the four primary seats (*pīṭha*) of the goddess. The goddess is the entire economy of energies. But she is not just the sum of all energies, she is also every one of them individually. They are deployed in sacred space, and indeed the energies are the sacred places themselves.

The Kubjikā cult is called the Transmission of the Mother (*avvākrama*) and also Śrīkrama. The corresponding Kālī cult is the Kālīkrama. The term '*krama*' means literally 'sequence' and, by ex-

[104] *prāṇāpānāntare līnā ānandaśaktir ucyate*
kharaṇḍadaṇḍamadhyasthā aṇucitkalayāpinī |
kālavelāvicitrāṅgī tanvī tattvaprabodhakī ||
nirānandapade līnā bhīṣaṇī paramāvyayā | (KuKh 2/5-6ab)

[105] *parānandasvarūpeṇa nityānandaparāyaṇam ||*
nirānandamayaṁ śāntaṁ kāraṇāṣṭakavarjitam |
guṇatattvavinirmuktaṁ heyopādeyavarjitam || (KuKh 13/5cd-6)

tension, a lineage, tradition or transmission. These are common, non-technical uses of the word. In a technical sense, '*krama*' denotes a Kaula liturgy, consisting as it does of a sequence of actions and recitations of mantras. Unlike the Śrīkrama, the Kālīkrama includes within the sequence of the rite of adoration (*pūjākrama*) the sequences of emanation, persistence, withdrawal and the inexplicable (*anākhya*). The *Mādhavakula* section of the *Jayadrathayāmala*, to which Abhinavagupta refers in his treatment of Kaula ritual, declares that:

"(According to this practice), in order to attain both worldly enjoyment (*bhoga*) and liberation, one must worship the tetrad of emanation, persistence, withdrawal and the inexplicable together with the sacred seats and the burning grounds." [106]

The four moments of emanation, persistence, withdrawal and the inexplicable are worshipped as separate configurations of goddesses. In some versions of the Kālīkrama a fifth moment is added. This is called 'Manifestation' — Bhāsā — and consists of the 'shining' (*bhāsā*) of all four moments together. Although the Kālīkrama is particularly sophisticated in its presentation of these moments in the cycle, it is not the only cult that does so. The cult of Śrīvidyā, like the Śaivasiddhānta, and indeed most elaborate Tantric ritual, replicates through ritual action the cyclic creation and destruction of the universe.[107] It is particularly well represented in the ritual program of the Kālīkrama. Indeed, in the Kālīkrama they are considered to be fundamental aspects of the goddess herself:

"(Oh Umā), unfolding awareness of creation, persistence and destruction! The dawning (of enlightened consciousness), unobstructed, eternal and imperishable, unfolds, illumined by (the devotion) of your devotees..." [108]

[106] *sṛṣṭisaṁsthitisaṁhārānām akramacatuṣṭayam |*
pīṭhaśmaśānasahitaṁ pūjayed bhogamokṣayoḥ || (TĀ 29/57)

[107] Davis (1991: 42) writes: "The universe oscillates. It comes and goes, emerges and disappears ... Śaiva daily worship also echoes the rythmn of the oscillating universe. The paired concepts of 'emission' (*sṛṣṭi*) and 're-absorption' (*saṁhāra*), with which Śaivite cosmology describes the movements of the oscillating universe, are embedded as an organizing logic in the patterning of worship."

[108] *nirjanasthitilayaprathātmike 'grāsanityaniravagrahodayaḥ |*
jṛmbhitas tvadanupākṣadīpito ... (CGC 81abc)

Moreover, the three states are contained in a fourth one beyond them called 'Nameless' (Anākhyā). This is the transcendental, pure dynamic consciousness (*saṁvit*) that generates, sustains and withdraws the three states.[109] A major characteristic of the Kālīkrama, this notion is absent in the basic form of the Kubjikā cult. Even though Kubjikā is frequently called the Nameless, she is not described as the fourth inexplicable consciousness which encompasses the triad of creation, persistence and destruction, as happens in the Kālīkrama. Let us examine some sample texts in order to observe the difference this identification makes. In the following passages Kubjikā is called the Nameless (Anāmā or Anākhyā) and she is identified with the energy of consciousness called Transmental (Unmanā):

"There, at the end of the mind, there is nothing else except the (energy) which is beyond the mind (*manonmanī*). (And so), she is called the Transmental (*unmanā*), the supreme (energy), who transports the nectar (of immortality)." [110]

Again:

"Above that is the Transmental (*unmanā*) state; that state (corresponds to the) Śāmbhava (principle). (One attains it) once one has practised (immersion in) the one Void where everything comes to an end. And once the Transmental at the end of the Void has been reached,

[109] The *Jayadrathayāmala* is a very important work for many reasons. One of these is the relatively frequent reference to the phenomenology of the dynamic energy of consciousness which in this text is termed *saṁvit*. This term is rare in other non-Buddhist Tantras despite the fact that it is the basic term used for consciousness by Kashmiri Śaivites. Even more striking, when compared with other Hindu Tantras of this period (i.e. prior to the development of Kashmiri Śaivism), is its surprisingly sophisticated idealism which identifies subject and object through the act of perception. Although the *Mahākālasaṁhitā* is a Kālī Tantra which postdates the *Jayadrathayāmala* and makes extensive use of this fourfold division of creation, persistence, destruction and a fourth state beyond them as well as the firefold one with 'manifestation' added to the four, it is devoid of the earlier idealism due to its exclusive focus on external ritual. The paradigm is so basic, whether internalized or not, that it is not surprising to discover that the Newar Kālī rites are similarly dominated by this divisions.

[110] *nānyaṁ tatra bhavet kiñcin manasānte manonmanī |*
unmanā sā samākhyātā parā hy amṛtavāhinī ‖ (KuKh 15/13)

who is it that is not freed from bondage?" [111]

"Emanation (*sṛṣṭi*) (generated) from the sequence (*krama*) abides alone in the Yoni, facing downwards. (This energy is) the Transmental (*manonmanī*), the essential Being (of all things — *sadbhāvā*) and the great wave (of the energy of consciousness) whose form is Light." [112]

Kubjikā is the energy 'beyond mind' which leads to the pure transcendent Being of her consort. She is the Inexplicable (Anākhyā), Without Name (Anāmā), not, primarily, because she is the *semper eternum* of God's Being which encompasses past, present and future in its inexplicable simultaneity — although she is also this — but, above all, because she is, literally, beyond the mind. She is the final stage at the end of a vertical ascent through the expanse of immanence, at the extremity closest to transcendence.

Again, the location of the multiple energies of the goddess is not only represented by the goddess's sacred seats. It also refers to the placement of the letters of the alphabet within a diagram called a *prastāra*. The letters of a mantra are extracted from this diagram. This is done by indicating the position of each letter in relation to other letters next to it. This process is the microcosmic parallel of creating the universe part by part from the phonemic energies that constitute the universal energy of the goddess. Thus, Kubjikā, like other Kaula goddesses, is an embodiment of Speech. As such, she is both every single phonemic energy and so is the one 'Letter' (*varṇā*), and is also transcendent and so is called 'Devoid of Letter' (*avarṇā*):

"Vidyā, the auspicious power (*śakti*), residing in letter and that devoid of letter, is of two types. (One is the energy of) the syllables (of all mantras — *akṣarā*). (The other is) the energy of consciousness. (By knowing this the adept attains) success (*siddhi*). On the path of the Vidyā is mental vigour (*medha*) (acquired) by action perceived (as correct) by the scripture." [113]

[111] *tasyordhve unmanāvasthā tadāvasthā hi śāmbhavam |*
śūnyam ekaṁ samābhyasya yatra sarvaṁ nivartate ||
śūnyānte tūnmane prāpte ko na mucyati bandhanāt | (KuKh 9/18-9ab)

[112] *kramāt sṛṣṭiḥ sthitā yonau ekā eva hy adhomukhī |*
sadbhāvā sā mahān ūrmir jyotirūpā manonmanī || (KuKh 24/44)

[113] *vidyā nāmākṣarā śaktir dvidhair bhedair vyavasthitā |*
cicchaktir iti siddhiḥ syāt sā varṇāvarṇagā śubhā ||
vidyāmārge ca medhas tu śāstradṛṣṭena karmaṇā | (KuKh 14/21-2ab)

Elsewhere the goddess says:

"She, O lord, is the deity and I have spoken of her as the deity. She has emerged from the cave hermitage (*guhāśrama*) and, devoid of sound (*asvara*), she transports sound (*svaravāhinī*)." [114]

The maṇḍala of Saṁvartā, which is the fundamental maṇḍala of the goddess Kubjikā, develops from the triangle mentioned above. It consist of six parts which, drawing from the terminology of temple architecture are called *prakāra*. The *prakāra*s are the encompassing series of walls in a temple compound, or around a tree, which demarcate the sacred space around the centre where the deity resides.[115] Encompassing through her maṇḍala all things in this way, the goddess pervades all things because she is all things. From this point of view, the drawing of the maṇḍala symbolizes the deployment of the goddess in the time and space of eternal pervasion. This takes place by a process the Kubjikā Tantras and the Kālīkrama call 'churning'. This is the process of emanation marked by the emergence of the individual energies or aspects (*kalā*) of Kula, the universal energy with which Kubjikā is identified.[116] The Kubjikā *Tantra of the Churning Bhairava* (*Manthānabhairavatantra*) explains:

[114] *eṣā sā devatā devatayā khyātā mayā prabho |*
guhāśramād viniṣkrāntā asvarā svaravāhinī || (KuKh 17/24)

[115] An interesting feature of this temple is that it is not the temple of the great Sanskritic tradition, but the archaic tree shrine of popular local folk tradition. Thus, in places, the texts apparently identify Kubjikā with a local goddess who lived in a tree or a stone underneath it. Accordingly, her Circle (*maṇḍala*) is the Circle of the Tree. The original circle being the shade of the tree of which the tree, and hence the stone, was the centre. Consistent with this symbolic representation of Kubjikā's abode is her name, Śilādevī — the Goddess Stone, as the goddess in the centre of this maṇḍala. Interiorized, the Tree Maṇḍala acquires the encompassing enclosures that are normally built when the deity of the tree and the stone develop in importance. Thus the development of the Tree Maṇḍala mirrors the development of the Hindu temple and the local, rural goddess of the Tree becomes the Great Goddess of the temple and the city who is kept hidden in her maṇḍala. In the final section of this essay, I deal with the goddess's association with trees and vegetation.

[116] The *Kumārikā* section of the *Manthānabhairavatantra* defines the nature of this activity as follows: "(The act of) churning is said to be emanation itself, which is the arising of the aspects of the (energy of) Kula (*manthānaṁ sṛṣṭir evoktaṁ kaulikaṁ kalasaṁbhavam*)|| (KuKh 17/35cd). Maheśvarānanda,

"Thus, (reality), supreme (transcendent) and inferior (immanent), is divided by the division (brought about by) the churning (*manthāna*) (of power and its possessor). In this way, Passion is present within emanation, the Passion which is the destruction of desire (*kāma*). And that is Haṁsa (the Gander), the Great Soul which is the nectar generated from the (primordial) fire. These two are called Śiva and Śakti. The triple universe is woven warp and woof (with them). This is the secret called the 'Great Churning' (*mahāmanthāna*)." [117]

The womb of energies, the Yoni, is, by a symbolically significant reversal and conjunction of polarities, known as the 'Yoniliṅga' (vulva-phallus) which is said to be 'churned from above'. The inner, unmanifest power is aroused by its own spontaneous inspiration. The upper part is the male principle — the Liṅga (phallus) — the lower part the female — the Yoni (vulva). The drop of the vital seed which is generated thereby is the empowering Command (*ājñā*), which is both the source of the universe and the means to attain the supreme state:

"The divine Liṅga, churned from above, is divided into six parts (*prakāra*). These are the Sacred Seats (*pīṭha*) and the rest. The (goddess) called Vakrikā (resides) there. She is the bliss of the Command (*ājñā*), pure with blissful sexual intercourse (*sukharati*). She creates all things and destroys (them). She is consciousness and, abiding in the supreme state, she bestows both (worldly) enjoyment and liberation." [118]

writing in South India during the thirteenth or twelfth century, quotes the *Kramakeli* in his *Mahārthamañjari* (p. 172). This important work by Abhinavagupta on the Kashmiri Kālīkrama had, along with many other works of this tradition, reached South India from the North by that time. The same passage is also quoted by Kṣemarāja in his commentary, the *Spandanirṇaya* (p. 6), on the *Spandakārikā*. The passage explains that the god of the Kālīkrama is called Manthānabhairava, lit. the Churning Bhairava, because "he engenders the creation etc. of all things (by arousing) and churning his own power". In this case, the teachings of the Kālīkrama and Kubjikā's Śrīkrama coincide.

[117] *tasmān manthānabhedena bheditaṁ ca parāparam* ||
evaṁ sṛṣṭigatānaṅgam anaṅgaṁ kāmanāśanam |
sa ca haṁsaṁ mahātmānaṁ jvalanād amṛtodbhavam ||
dvāv etau śivaśaktyākhyau otaprotaṁ jagattrayam |
etad rahasyam ākhyātaṁ mahāmanthānasaṁjñayā || (KuKh 24/27cd - 29)

[118] *pīṭhādyaiḥ ṣaṭprakārais taduparimathitaṁ divyaliṅgaṁ vibhinnam* |
tatrājñānandarūpā sukharativimalā viśvakartrī ca hantrī |
cidrūpā vakrikākhyā paramapadagatā bhuktidā muktidā ca | (KuKh 2/10)

Again:

"In this way Rudra's energy, the mother of persistence and destruction, has pervaded all things with the three varieties (of the powers of will, knowledge and action). The primordial and free God of the gods, who is both Kula (Śakti) and Akula (Śiva), resides in the centre. His Command, in the form of a Drop (of sperm — *bindu*), is consciousness which bestows accomplishment (*siddhi*) and removes the fear of the fettered. (The Command is the goddess) Perpetually Wet (Nityaklinnā) who, aroused by her own passion (*svaraktā*), is free and bestows the perpetual bliss which is delighted by phenomenal existence.

"In the middle is the divine Liṅga which gives supreme bliss. It is the Drop and the Sky. The perpetually blissful nature, which is the churning of the two, is divided into six parts. I salute the (goddess) called Kubjikā whose beautiful body is aroused and engenders passion there (or 'makes love there' — *kurvantī tatra kāmaṁ*)." [119]

The Newars, following a pattern common to Kaula Tantrism in general from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, classify the lineage goddesses as belonging to six traditions (*ṣaḍāmnāya*). They are symbolically arranged and worshipped in the four cardinal directions along with the nadir and the zenith. According to a representative Newar liturgy, they are:

1) Upper: Tripurā, 2) Lower: Hāṭakeśvarī or the Buddhist Vajrayoginī, 3) East: Pūrṇeśī, 4) North: forms of Kālī including Guhyakālī, Siddhilakṣmī and Dakṣiṇakālī, 5) West: Kubjikā, 6) South: Niśeśī.[120]

[119] *evaṁ vyāptaṁ samastaṁ sthitilayajananī rudraśaktis tribhedaiḥ tanmadhye devadevam akulakulam ayaṁ tanmayādyasvatantram | yasyājñā bindubhūtā paśubhayaharaṇī siddhidā bodharūpā nityaklinnā svaraktā bhavamuditasadānandadātrī svatantrā || tanmadhye divyaliṅgaṁ paramasukhakaraṁ bindurūpaṁ kharūpaṁ nityānandasvarūpaṁ tadubhayamathanaṁ ṣaṭprakārair vibhinnam | kurvantīṁ tatra kāmaṁ kṣubhitavaratanuṁ śrīkubjikākhyaṁ namāmi ||*
(CMSS 1/5-6)

[120] I have drawn this information from *Paścimajyeṣṭhāmnāyakarmārcanapaddhati* (fols. 87b-91b) where the worship of the deities of six traditions is described as a part of the regular rite of the western tradition (*paścimāmnāya*, which is that of the goddess Kubjikā). It is important to note that, whatever

These six goddesses and consorts, or their equivalents, are worshipped in the corners of a six-sided figure formed from two triangles. One triangle faces down and represents Śakti — the lineage goddess. The other faces up and represents Śiva — the goddess's consort. This figure, seen very commonly in and around Newar temples and houses symbolizes the union of opposites represented by these divine, all-embracing polarities. Union takes place between the triangles, at the corners and in the centre, which is marked by a dot, representing the fecund fusion of the vital seed of the couple. Kashmiri Śaiva texts explain that this figure also represents the sexual union of the divinized human couple engaged in a special type of Kaula ritual.[121]

the tradition, the deities of all six must be worshipped. Thus the initiation Newars receive not only initiates them into the worship of their own lineage deity but also into the worship of all of the others. The lineage goddess is not worshipped exclusively; but she is given pride of place. Moreover, whoever one's own lineage deity may be, the maṇḍala in which the deities of the six lineages are worshipped is enclosed by Kubjikā's mantra (see below). Thus Kubjikā, in the form of her mantra, encompasses them all and thereby energizes them.

The contents of the six traditions are the ones prescribed by the *Parātantra*. In 1947 a series of articles written by the Nepalese major-general Dhana Saṁśer Jaṅgabahādur Rāṇā came out in the Hindī magazine *Caṇḍī*. In these articles the author expounds the pantheon and related matters of these six traditions on the basis of the *Parātantra* and other texts considered authoritative by Newar Śāktas. Note that the *Parātantra* (chapter six) prescribes the worship of Vajrayoginī as the deity of the Lower Tradition, stating that this is the tradition of the Buddhists. Newar Kaulas have replaced her with Hāṭakeśvarī who, along with her consort Hāṭakeśvara, governs the hell worlds. This change is in consonance with the expurgation by Newar Kaulas of Buddhist influences in their rites.

[121] Referring to the symbolism of the formation of the letter AI, Abhinavagupta says that the letter E is represented by the triangle of the goddess's Vulva, which is "beautiful with the fragrance of emission" (*visargāmodasundaram* - TĀ 3/95a). Then: "When the powers of the absolute (the letter A) and bliss (the letter Ā) become firmly established there (in the triangle, which is the letter E), it assumes the condition of the six-spoked (*maṇḍalaṣaḍavasthiti*, i.e. AI) brought about by the union of two triangles." (TĀ 3/95b-6a). Jayaratha comments that "in the process of the practice of ritual sex (*caryākrama*) the condition corresponding to the Gesture of the Six Spokes (*ṣaḍaramudrā*) arises by the encapsulation of the two triangles, (one being that of the) male

Newar initiates are also aware of this symbolism and openly accept it. When questioned about this, one explained that this is the reason why Newars in general, and Kaula initiates in particular, prefer the householder life. Celibate renouncers cannot perform all the rituals. What such statements mean and imply exactly is never made explicit by any of the people I have interviewed. So the reader must be content, as I have to be, to wonder.

Just as this six-sided figure represents the six lineages, it is also commonly found in the maṇḍala of the lineage goddesses, technically called the *Kramamaṇḍala*. This is the case with the *Kramamaṇḍala* of the Western Tradition (*paścimāmnāya*), which the Kubjikā Tantras describe as "the city of the illumined intellect (*dhī*)"[122] because it is the embodiment of the teachings of the lineage (*krama*) of teachers who transmit the tradition (*krama*) and because its constituent elements, represented by mantras, are worshipped in a fixed sequence (*krama*) which constitutes the liturgy — *Krama*. There are twenty-eight such constituents and so the rite of adoration (*pūjākrama*) of this maṇḍala is called the Sequence of Twenty-Eight (*aṣṭaviṁśatikrama*). These twenty-eight constituents are represented by mantras arranged in six groups consisting of four, five, six, four, five, and four parts, respectively. They are projected onto the corners of the six-sided figure. According to one interpretation (see KuKh 2/8), they are as follows:

1) The Group of Four: the intellect along with the energies of will, knowledge and action.

2) The Group of Five: the five types of sensation, namely sound, form, taste, smell, and touch.

adept (*siddha*) and (the other that of the) yoginī." The sides of these triangles are formed from the three channels of the vital breath (*iḍā, piṅgalā* and *suṣumnā*) that come together in the genital region of each of the two partners engaged in this rite. The vital breath is impelled along these three channels by the energies of will, knowledge and action. When these extroverted energies are experienced in conjunction with the inner energies of the absolute and its bliss, as happens for a moment, at least, in sexual intercourse, the three energies and corresponding vital breaths of the partners work together to generate the emission (*visarga*) through which the fecund seed of the couple is projected with force through the centre.

[122] *yad etat kaulikaṁ jñānaṁ kramamaṇḍaladhīpuram* | (KuKh 5/1ab)

3) The Group of Six: the five senses, namely the ear, eye, tongue, nose and skin, and the mind.

4) The Group of Four: the four states, namely waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the Fourth.

5) The Group of Five: the group of five gross elements — water, fire, earth, wind and space.

6) The Group of Four: the three qualities of Nature, namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas,* along with Śiva, their master.

According to contemporary Newar ritual procedure, the two superimposed triangles are surrounded by an eight-petalled lotus. Eight mother goddesses (*mātṛkā*) are worshipped on the petals. They guard the directions and the divine couple in the centre. Outside this eight-petalled lotus is a sixteen-petalled lotus. The deities worshipped here are the eight mother goddesses again, but this time along with their consorts, the eight Bhairavas, who are worshipped next to them. The coupling that takes place in the centre between Kubjikā and her Bhairava is thus reflected in this encompassing circle which completes the periphery of the core of the maṇḍala energized by these couplings. This is then enclosed in the final outer circle consisting of a thirty-two-petalled lotus on the petals of which are worshipped the thirty-two goddesses who are the energies of the thirty-two syllables of Kubjikā's mantra.

The foundation of each sophisticated Tantric system, such as this one, is the maṇḍala it describes.[123] It is through it that the rite of adoration of the principal deity or couple, which is in the centre of the maṇḍala, takes place. Accordingly, we find that the six groups which are the vital core of the goddess's maṇḍala recur repeatedly in the Kubjikā Tantras, usually with some further reflection or addition drawing, as it were, more each time from the configuration of ener-

[123] The core of a Tantric system of the early period consists of the extensive description of the maṇḍala of its main deity and the rites associated with it. Certainly, such Tantric systems include numerous other rituals and practices; nonetheless the system proper essentially consists of this. The many other matters that are not directly associated with the worship of the main maṇḍala or one of its forms are accretions, additions, and appendages that may well be extensive and even significant, but they are not essential to the system. By this I mean that the basic system remains intact even if they were to be absent.

gies. The components of the maṇḍala are worshipped systematically, part by part, each with its own group of mantras. The deployment of energies in space is thus parallel to their deployment in time. Both of these are held together by their sequence (*krama*) in time and space.[124] There are three such sequences. They are the Sequences of the Child, the Youth (also called the Middle One) and the Eldest. They are also called the Sequences of the Individual Soul (*āṇava*), Energy (*śākta*) and Śiva (*śāmbhava*).[125] Kubjikā is the goddess of these sequences (*kramadevī*), and she manifests as and through them in the form of their mantras. This identity is acted out symbolically by the worship

[124] Abhinavagupta explains in his brilliantly profound manner:

"The extending process of diversification and development (*kalanā*) along the path (of the cosmic order) takes place in two ways, namely in a sequential and in a non-successive manner. Succession (*krama*) and its absence essentially amount to (the two ways in which forms are manifest) in the field of phenomenal existence. Thus this can take place either through the differentiated development of single units (*ekakalanā*, as happens, for example, in making the transition from cause to effect) or (simultaneously of a number of units, as happens when viewing) a picture." (TĀ 6/6)

We may note in passing that Abhinavagupta is indebted for these concepts not to any Tantric tradition but to Bhartṛhari, the philosopher of grammar, for this important exegesis of the Kaula term *krama* (meaning literally 'sequence' or 'succession').

[125] Nobody who has studied the Trika Tantrism elaborated by Abhinavagupta can fail to notice that these three sequences bear the names of the three major categories into which Abhinavagupta, inspired by his Trika teacher Śambhunātha, has classified practice both ritual and yogic (which one could say is roughly equivalent, as Abhinavagupta presents it, to what may be called mysticism). It appears that these terms were originally used in the Tantras to denote phases in the liturgies of some of the rituals they taught, as is the case with the Kubjikā Tantras. Once again one is struck by the extensive use Abhinavagupta has made of the language of ritual to talk about mysticism, that is, experience of the sacred, and to formulate philosophical and theological concepts. Indeed, he is so adept at speaking the language of ritual for such purposes that one is apt to forget that a work such as the *Tantrāloka* is, despite its extremely rich philosophy and mystical soteriology, structured in the form of a liturgical work (*paddhati*). Indeed, Abhinavagupta himself tells us right at the beginning of his *Tantrāloka* that it is a work not of philosophy or a treatise on Yoga but a work concerning ritual:

of a fourth sequence, which is conceived as containing the other three, namely the Sequence of the Female Skyfarer (*khecarīkrama*). The energies of these sequences of mantras are further reinforced and applied in the ritual by equating the six parts of the maṇḍala with the goddess's six limbs and her six faces. These are worshipped in all three sequences.

In this way the goddess is worshipped as all that exists both externally, in the outside world, and internally within the body. The latter aspect is represented in various ways. For example, the six parts of the maṇḍala represent six configurations of the phonemic energies that constitute speech and mantras present in the body of the goddess and of each person. These are the standard Six Wheels (*ṣaṭcakra*) of what is nowadays commonly known as Kuṇḍalinī Yoga. This is a very important part of the ritual and cosmology of this tradition since the goddess Kubjikā is essentially, not just secondarily, identified with Kuṇḍalinī.[126] Thus the texts take great pains to describe these Six Wheels.

santi paddhatayaś citrāḥ srotobhedeṣu bhūyasā |
anuttaraṣaḍardhārthakrame tv ekāpi nekṣyate ||
ity ahaṁ bahuśaḥ sadbhiḥ śiṣyasabrahmacāribhiḥ |
arthito racaye spaṣṭāṁ pūrṇārthāṁ prakriyām imām ||

"Various are the liturgical manuals (*paddhati*) in use in the many diverse traditions. But for the rituals (*krama*) of the Anuttaratrika there is not even one to be seen. I therefore, repeatedly requested by (my) sincere disciples and fellows, compose this liturgy (*prakriyā*), which is clear and complete." (TĀ 1/14-5)

The term *prakriyā* may, in some contexts, mean a 'literary work' but here I take it to mean 'liturgy'. This usage coincides with that found in the expressions *tantraprakriyā* and *kulaprakriyā*. We are told by Jayaratha, the commentator on the *Tantrāloka*, that the rituals and practices in the *Tantrāloka* belong to these two types, namely Tantric ritual and Kaula ritual. The former is centred on the god, Bhairava or Śiva, and the latter on the goddess or goddesses.

[126] All the major Kaula goddesses are identified with Kuṇḍalinī. The goddess Kubjikā differs from other Kaula goddesses in that she is not Kuṇḍalinī merely by ascription. Much of her mythology, iconography and ritual is moulded primarily around her personage, metaphysical identity and activity as Kuṇḍalinī. It is not an extra feature of her nature which has been added on to the others from the outside, but is part of the very essence of her very specific

This Yoga can be practiced for realization coupled with worldly enjoyment. This is termed *anugraha* ('grace'). It can also be practised to accomplish magical acts designed to control and harm others. This is a form of 'worldly benefit' (*bhoga*) called *nigraha* ('restraint').[127] The texts warn that this should be practised only when the intended victims have seriously transgressed the rule (*samaya*) of the tradition. Each wheel generates and sustains one or more of the components of the body, the flesh, fat, bone, marrow and so on. Each of these components is governed by one of Kubjikā's attendants who are the mistresses (*nāyikā*) of each wheel. Called yoginīs, these are demonic goddesses or witches who can be invoked to perform magic rites. Thus, each one of the six wheels can correspond to one of the standard six magic rites (*ṣaṭkarma*). A practice is recorded for each one according to the magic rite one wishes to perform. A separate Vidyā[128] and maṇḍala (also called yantra) is prescribed for each one. Even so, they are all linked to one of the three varieties of Kubjikā's thirty-two-syllabled mantra known as Vajrakubjī. In this way, a link is maintained with the supreme goddess who is identified with Kuṇḍalinī as the energy of the vital breath and speech.

iconic form and nature. Moreover, as Sanderson (1988: 687) points out: "The system of six power-centres (*cakras*) is also characteristic of the yogic rituals of the *Kubjikāmatatantra*. Later it became so universal, being disseminated as part of the system of *kuṇḍalinīyoga* beyond the boundaries of the Tantric cults, that it has been forgotten in India (and not noticed outside it) that it is quite absent in all the Tantric traditions except this one and the cult of the goddess Tripurasundarī." It appears, moreover, that the cult of Tripurā borrowed this from that of Kubjikā. Evidence for this is the addition in the Tripurā cult of what are clearly three extra subsidiary centres to make nine. This is because the maṇḍala of Tripurā is made of nine enclosures (*āvaraṇa*). Kubjikā's maṇḍala, as we have seen, is made of six parts (*prakāra*) to which the six centres correspond without need of accommodation.

[127] *nigrahānugrahe śaktir bhavate tava niścayam* |
martyaloke vrajitvā tu kuru krīḍāṁ yathecchayā ||

"It is sure that yours is the power to assist (*anugraha*) and to obstruct (*nigraha*). Once gone to the mortal world, play as you will." (KuKh 5/54)

[128] Just as the male mantra embodies a god in sound form, similarly the female Vidyā embodies a goddess.

Another important aspect of the deployment of the goddess's power in time and space is the transmission of her empowering Command (*ājñā*) through initiation. The temporal sequence (*krama*) in this case is the lineage of the transmission. This is the goddess's family (*kula, anvaya, santati*) which belongs to her clan (*gotra*) and house (*grha*).[129] Thus the residence, place of initiation and preaching of the teachers in the goddess's family should all be recollected along with each teacher. The goddess gives rise in this way to the sequence which is her external manifest form. The sequence (*krama*) of the rite and the sequence of the lineage would not be complete without it. Accordingly, the texts prescribe that the Maṇḍala of the Teachers (*gurumaṇḍala*) should be drawn along with the Maṇḍala of Saṁvartā (that is, the *kramamaṇḍala* of this school described above), but worshipped before it. Accordingly, Newar Kaulas worship the teachers of their lineage along with the legendary founders of the cult of their lineage goddess in a maṇḍala that is drawn specially for this purpose as part of the preliminaries of the more elaborate rites of adoration (*kramārcana*).[130]

[129] This is a common analogy found in various forms and more or less emphasized in all Tantric traditions. Indeed it reaches back into Vedic times. The analogy became concrete fact in the not uncommon case of the Brahmin father who acted as the tutor and spiritual preceptor of his son. In this context, the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* envisages the transfer of spiritual knowledge literally as a transfer of vital force from father to son at the moment of the father's death:

"When a father thinks that he is going to die, he says to his son, "You are Brahman, you are the sacrifice, you are the world." [...] When a father who knows this leaves this world, he penetrates his son together with speech, the mind and the vital force. [...] The father remains in this world through the son alone. The divine and immortal organ of speech, mind and vital force pervade him." (1/5/17; English translation drawn from *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1979).

Finding support from such traditions in the Brahminical worldview, the Newars have understood the Tantric analogy between a spiritual lineage and familial one literally.

[130] Vajrācāryas, the Newar Buddhist Tantric priests, do the same. Locke informs us that: "The Guru Maṇḍala rite is a ritual performed at the beginning of every *pūjā* performed by a Vajrācārya. The *maṇḍala* in question is the Mt. Meru *maṇḍala* which is offered to the gurus i.e. the Buddha, the Dharma the Sangha and Vajrasattva." For a detailed account of this rite see Locke 1980: 81-95 from where this reference is drawn.

The worship of the lineage of teachers and sacred places transposed onto the body through the ritual of deposition (*nyāsa*) is basic, common practice in all major Kaula schools. Thus in Abhinavagupta's presentation of Kaula ritual the worship of the maṇḍala with these components is an essential preliminary to ritual union with the Tantric consort. He writes:

"Kula is the wheel (*cakra*) which consists of mantras, the (accomplished adepts and teachers of the tradition known as) Siddhas, the vital breath, (embodied) consciousness and the senses. The powerful (universal) consciousness which resides within it is here called Kuleśvarī. She must be worshipped in the centre ... either alone (*ekavīrā*) or together with her Lord." [131]

The seed syllable mantra AIṂ is the form of the goddess Kubjikā worshipped in the centre of her maṇḍala along with Bhairava, whose form is the seed syllable called Navātman. The seed syllable of the goddess Tripurā is also AIṂ [132] and it is called Vāgbhava ('Essence of Speech') in both systems. As this syllable, Kubjikā is identified in one of her forms with the goddess Parā. She is thus linked to both conceptions, without coinciding exactly with either. But note that although she is frequently identified with the goddess Parā she differs, in this context, from the Parā Vidyā of the Trika which is SAUḤ.[133]

[131] *mantrasiddhaprāṇasaṁvitkaraṇātmani yā kule* ||
cakrātmake citiḥ prabhvī proktā seha kuleśvarī |
sā madhye ... pūjyā ... ||
ekavīrā ca sā pūjyā yadi vā sakuleśvarā || (TĀ 29/46cd-8)

I have published a diagram of the *Gurumaṇḍala* described in the *Tantrāloka* to which the interested reader is referred (see Dyczkowski 1987a: 81). Note that the maṇḍala has been published upside down.

[132] Cf: *aiṁkārāsanam ārūḍhāṁ vajrapadmoparisthitām* |
siddhiṁ māṁ dadate nityaṁ śrīkubjākhyāṁ namāmy aham ||

"I salute the venerable (goddess) called Kubjā who, mounted on the seat of the letter AIṂ and seated on the Thunderbolt Lotus, constantly gives me accomplishment (*siddhi*)." (KuKh 5/73)

[133] In this context, Kubjikā as Parā is not to be directly identified with the goddess Parā who forms a part of the triad Parā, Parāparā and Aparā. The Vidyā of Parā (as a member of this triad) found in the KMT is different. See above, footnote 65.

AIṂ is one of the most important seed syllables in the mantric system of the Kubjikā cult. It precedes most of the mantras and Vidyās of this school. Indeed, it is an important seed syllable for all the Kaula traditions prevalent in Nepal. Thus the Newars regularly place it in the centre of the maṇḍalas they make to house their lineage goddesses. Moreover, it is the first of an important group of five seed syllables called the 'Five Brahmās' (*pañcabrahma*) or 'Five Instruments' (*pañcakaraṇa*). In one version, these are AIṂ HRĪṂ ŚRĪṂ PHREṂ HSAUṂ.[134] They are well known, in a variant form, in the Śrīvidyā tradition as the Five Ghosts (*pañcapreta*) who support the throne on which Tripurā sits, namely, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Maheśvara and Sadāśiva. They are located in the innermost triangle of Śrīcakra. The first three, which are said to be the seeds of creation, persistence and destruction, respectively, prefix most of the mantras used in the worship of Śrīcakra.

The consort of Kubjikā is a form of Bhairava called Navātman. His seed syllable is HSKṢMLVRYŪṂ. This seed syllable, or variants of the same, were known to Kashmiri Śaivites from the *Svacchandatantra* and other sources.[135] It has two forms in the cults of both Kubjikā and Śrīvidyā: one is HSKṢMLVRYĀṂ, which is related to the male aspect. The other is SHKṢMLVRYĪṂ, which is related to the female aspect.[136] The first form is also used in the rites

[134] This is according to KMT 5/34ff. Important variant forms of the last two syllables commonly found in Newar liturgies and other Kubjikā Tantras are KHPHREṂ (for PHREṂ) and HSŪAUṂ, HSVŪAUṂ or HSRŪAUṂ (for HSAUṂ).

[135] Kṣemarāja analyzes it in his commentary on SvT 4/102-3. There he describes how to write it in a diagram and how each letter corresponds to a principle (*tattva*). It is also used in Śaivasiddhānta ritual (see SŚP 2/11, *Pūrvakāraṇa* 2/10-11a and *Aghoraśivapaddhati* p. 255).

[136] At the beginning of the worship of Śrīcakra the teacher is invoked through what is called the Guru mantra. According to one liturgical text, this is as follows:

aiṁ hrīṁ śrīṁ aiṁ klīṁ sauḥ haṁsaḥ śivaḥ so 'haṁ hasakhaphreṁ hskṣmlvryūṁ hsauṁ shkṣmlvryīṁ shauḥ svarūpanirūpaṇahetave svagurave śrīannapūrṇāmbāsahitaśrī-amṛtānandanāthaśrīguruśrīpādukāṁ pūjayāmi tarpayāmi namaḥ | (Taken from *Śrī Cakra, The Source of the Cosmos* special issue, *The Journal of the Śrī Rājarājeswarī Pīṭham*, Rochester, NY 14623, p. 1.)

of the *Svacchandatantra*. The Kubjikā texts hardly do more than note the existence of both forms, even so both are commonly prescribed together in the liturgies compiled by the Newars as happens in the worship of Śrīvidyā.

The Goddess of Fire

Now that we have dealt with some of the creative aspects of the goddess Kubjikā, we should refer to the other, destructive ones. As we have noted already, while Kālī destroys as she creates, Kubjikā creates as she destroys. This is expressed symbolically by equating her with the all comsuming fire that burns up the universe at the end of each aeon, namely the Fire of Time (*kālāgni*), here called Saṁvartā (the 'Fire of the Aeons') or Vāḍavāgni (lit. 'The Fire from the Mare's [Mouth]'). According to the Purāṇas, this fire burns at the bottom of the ocean. The water it causes to evaporate falls as life-giving rain. Similarly, the energy in the centre of the Circle of the Fire of the Aeons (*saṁvartāmaṇḍala*), the main maṇḍala of the Kubjikā Tantras, is said to consume the Ocean of Kula.[137] This ocean is the maṇḍala

There are many lineages of initiates into the cult of Śrīvidyā. Unlike the goddess Kubjikā who has been confined in great secrecy to the Kathmandu Valley for centuries, the cult of Śrīvidyā has flourished throughout the Indian subcontinent for not less than eight hundred years. As happens with other Tantric cults, individual lineages may produce liturgies (*paddhati*, *pūjāvidhi*) of their own, in some cases in great numbers. The liturgical text quoted above belongs to an important lineage that has initiates not only in India but also in the United States. The interested reader is referred to this publication for a list of names and addresses of some of these initiates.

[137] *prajvalantī svakiraṇaiś carubhī raudramaṇḍale* |

"She burns intensely with her beautiful rays in Rudra's sphere (*maṇḍala*)." (KuKh 13/121ab)

Again:

kramamaṇḍalamadhyastham jvalantaṁ dīparūpakam |
tal liṅgaṁ taṁ ca vṛkṣaṁ ca vidhinā kramanāyakam ||

"The (reality) in the centre of the Krama Maṇḍala burns in the form of (the flame of a) lamp. That is the Liṅga, that the Tree and, according to the rule, the master of the Krama." (Ibid. 8/77).

Although Abhinavagupta did not make use of Kubjikā Tantras as his sources, he knew this symbolism well from other Tantric traditions. He incorporates it

itself, which is made of the energies of the goddess who is Kula. As the fire which burns at the end of a cosmic age and consumes all the worlds, it remains hidden in the darkness of the Void produced thereby. It is from here, the energy hidden within the Void, that creation proceeds. As the goddess tells the god:

"O Hara, within this void form, one with darkness, was the mind of the bliss of the play (of transcendental Being). It was tranquility (itself) close to Kula (the energy of the absolute) and I knew nothing at all, O Hara, by speech, hearing or sight. Nor was I aware (of anything). The joy, fifty-fold (of the fifty letters of the alphabet), which is the bliss of liberation (*kaivalya*) was within the Fire of the Aeons (*saṁvartā*). Its will is the Unmanifest whose form is subtly manifest. Then I was overcome with wonder and (asked myself): 'What is this voidness?' And realizing that it was terrible and deep, I was frightened and (my) mind slumbered. Having entered into Bhairava's sacrifice, I remained there in (my) supreme form. And as an atom (of consciousness) the Lion (*siṁhaka*) (bore) a subtle form. O Lord, the Lion Fire (*siṁhasaṁvartaka*), full of darkness, became manifest (*vyāvṛta*)."[138]

into his own Trika system presenting it, as he usually does, with a sophisticated interpretation based on a phenomenology of universal divine consciousness acting in and through each act of perception:

"This path is worthy of being described in this way because the yogi quickly (*drāk*) attains Bhairava's nature, contemplating the sequence of its configuration (*prakriyākrama*) (contained in the initial impulse towards perception) as is explained in the Spanda teaching. Experiencing all the (cosmic) path (in this way, the yogi) should dissolve it into the deities (who preside over it). They are (then merged), as before, progressively into the wheel of the body, vital breath and intellect. (Finally) all this (merges) collectively into his own consciousness. This consciousness that is full of all things and is continuously worshipped (and practised) is (like) the fire of universal destruction (which dries up) the ocean of transmigration." (TĀ 8/5-8)

Concerning the Spanda teachings see my trilogy on this school of Kashmiri Śaivism, *The Doctrine of Vibration, The Stanzas on Vibration* and *The Aphorisms of Śiva*.

[138] *śūnyākāre tamaikatve ramaṇānandacetasam |*
śamanaṁ kulasaṁkāśaṁ kiñcij jānāmy ahaṁ hara ||
na vācā śruticakṣubhyāṁ na ca buddhyāmy ahaṁ hara |
kaivalyānandam āhlādaṁ saṁvartāntaṁ śatārdhakam ||

This Tantric goddess, who as we have noted above, was in all probability a local folk goddess, is thus implicitly identified with the fire of the Vedic sacrifice into which the worlds are offered and from which they arise again. In this process the goddess herself is as if transformed. Both these themes, namely the transformation of the goddess and her association with the Vedic sacrifice are explicit in one of the rare myths of this Kaula tradition. This myth is yet another of very many versions scattered throughout the sacred texts of India of the story of Dakṣa's sacrifice.[139] The common nucleus of the story is simple. A Brahmin named Dakṣa sponsored a great Vedic sacrifice to which he invited all the gods except Śiva of whom he disapproved even though, indeed because, he was the beloved husband of his favourite daughter, Umā. The angered god was sorely offended and, much angered, destroyed the sacrifice. Thus to Dakṣa accrued the demerit of failing to complete it. A Kubjikā Tantra goes on to add its own slant to the story:

"When the goddess came to know of what had occurred, (she said): 'My father Dakṣa's sacrifice has been destroyed by me because (its destruction was) due to me. I am the sinner (and so) will purify myself!' She stoked the Supreme Fire, brilliant with waves of raging flames. She contemplated it burning fiercely from the middle of the Maṇḍala of Gesture (*mudrāmaṇḍala*). She then assumed the adamantine posture and recalled to mind the energy of Aghoreśvarī.

tasyecchā kiñcic cinmātram avyaktaṁ vyaktirūpiṇam |
tadāhaṁ vismayam āpannā kim idaṁ śūnyarūpakam ||
iti matvā gahanaṁ ghoraṁ bhītāhaṁ suptacetasā |
praviṣṭā bhairave yajñe sthitāhaṁ pararūpataḥ ||
paramāṇusvarūpeṇa kiñcid rūpaṁ ca siṁhakam |
siṁhasaṁvartakaṁ nātha vyāvṛtaṁ tamasākulam || (KuKh 24/7-11)

[139] The myth of the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice occurs for the first time in the *Ṛgveda* (1/51/5-7). It is retold in the *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* (13/9-10) and in the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* (1/7/3/1-4). It occurs in both the epics and in the Purāṇas, including *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparvan* 284; *Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa* 65/9-12; *Śivapurāṇa, Rudrasaṁhitā, Satīkhaṇḍa* 12-42 *and Vāyavīyasaṁhitā* 18-33; *Vāyupurāṇa* 30; *Liṅgapurāṇa* 100; *Skandapurāṇa, Maheśakhaṇḍa, Kedārakāṇḍa* 2; *Brahmapurāṇa* 39; *Kūrmapurāṇa* 1/15; *Matsyapurāṇa* 5; *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 32; *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa* 6/38; *Mahābhāgavatapurāṇa* 4/1-10 and *Kālikāpurāṇa* 16-18.

She burnt herself with the Fire of Time and became (like) a smokeless, burning coal. (This) wise woman, dead and reduced to ashes, left the mortal world."[140]

The goddess was then born to Himavat, the god of the Himalaya range, as Bhadrakālikā.[141] Śiva, recognizing her voice as that of his wife Umā, again sought and obtained her hand in marriage. Thus he united with her once more and all the polarities of existence were reunited. The multiplicity of all things fused back into their complementary opposite pole, the one transcendent Being which is the original source. The myth teaches in this way, amongst other things, that the adept must similarly throw himself into the purifying fire in the centre of the maṇḍala. There he will fuse with the Supreme Goddess (Parā) who, in her fierce aspect, is the Transmental (*manonmanī*), the energy which is the light of consciousness[142] described in the following passage:

"Horrific (*ghorā*), she burns without smoke, (like) the flame on the wick of a lamp. Shining like countless millions of Rudras, she is Rudra's energy, and is both supreme (transcendent) and inferior (immanent). (This) energy is the Drop (*bindu*) which is the deluge (of energy that flows) right up to the earth and contains millions of millions of Rudras. Its radiant power (*tejas*) is the Supreme Energy, Rudra's energy, the Great Goddess."[143]

[140] *jñātvā cedaṁ tadā devī idaṁ vṛttāntam āgatam* ||
matsaṁbandhāc ca dakṣasya ahaṁ sā pāpakāriṇī |
pitur yajñaṁ mayā dhvastaṁ ātmānaṁ śodhayāmy aham ||
jvalajvālormisaṁkāśam uddīpya paramānalam |
jvalantaṁ cintayitvā tu mudrāmaṇḍalamadhyataḥ ||
vajrāsanaṁ tato badhvā smṛtāghoreśvarīkalā |
kālāgninā svayaṁ dagdhā nirdhūmāṅgāratāṁ gatā ||
mṛtā bhasmagatā sādhvī uttīrṇā martyalokataḥ | (KuKh 3/162cd- 6ab)

[141] See above, fn. 83.

[142] *tadantaragatā vidyā yā parā parameśvarī* |
sā śaktir bhīmarūpeṇa jyotirūpā manonmanī ||
"Within that is the Vidyā who is Parā, the Supreme Goddess. She is energy in (her) terrible aspect, the Transmental (*manonmanī*) (whose) form is light." (KuKh 13/117)

[143] *dīpavartiśikhā ghorā jvālinī dhūmravarjitā* |
rudrakoṭisahasrābhā rudraśaktiḥ parāparā ||
rudrakoṭidharo binduḥ śaktir ābhūmisaṁplavaḥ |
tasya tejaḥ parā śaktir rudraśaktir maheśvarī || (KuKh 13/118 -9)

The Lunar Goddess

Along with her associations with the cosmic fire, Kubjikā, like Kālī, Tripurā and, indeed, many other goddesses, has extensive lunar associations. The moon alternates progressively between light and darkness. It both bestows and withdraws its light. Similarly the lunar goddess shines darkly as it were. Kālī, who as her name tells us with its double meaning, is both Lady Time and the Black Lady, is in apparently paradoxical manner described as radiant light (*bhāsā*). Kubjikā also possesses these two aspects. In her case however, although she is also sometimes said to be dark blue (*śyāmā*) or dark blue and red (*śyāmāruṇa*), her brightness, rather than darkness, is more frequently emphasized in the forms, myths and sacred geography associated with her. Thus, for example, she is said to reside on the Island of the Moon in the form of a lunar stone in the centre of the island symbolizing the lunar drop (*bindu*). Her lunar whiteness is associated with the fertilizing sperm. Her lunar power and ambiguously plural sexual nature combine, and so she is called Śukrā — Female Sperm. She lives on the triple peak of the Mountain of the Moon which is identified with Meru, the mountain at the centre of the world. Her abode is the City of the Moon and her house is the House of the Moon, where perfected yogis and yoginīs reside. By entering this tradition, the initiate becomes a sacred person in a sacred land, mountain or island in the company of perfect beings. It is a secret inner world — the land of the maṇḍala.

Set in sacred space and sacred time, the sacred house of the tradition is thought to be regenerated in and through each cosmic age. The present is a summation of the past; it is its completion. Time and space work together in the continuity of the lineage, the family and its descendants (*santāna*). To enter the secret, sacred places one must be a part of this process. One must be born from it, sustained by it, and ultimately merge into it.

The 'process' (*krama*) in this case is the sequence of the phases of the inner moon. As Eliade (1974: 155) notes:

"The sun is always the same, always itself, never in any sense 'becoming'. The moon, on the other hand, is a body which waxes, wanes and disappears, a body whose existence is subject to the universal law of becoming, of birth and death. The moon, like man, has

a career involving tragedy, for its failing, like man's, ends in death. For three nights the starry sky is without a moon. But this 'death' is followed by a rebirth: the new moon. The moon's going out, in 'death', is never final. One Babylonian hymn to Sin sees the moon as 'a fruit growing from itself'. It is reborn of its own substance, in pursuance of its own destined career. This perpetual return to its beginnings, and this ever-recurring cycle make the moon the heavenly body above all others concerned with the rhythms of life."

In the body, the "rhythms of life" are most clearly apparent in the movement of the vital breath, and it is in this movement that the goddess's lunar nature is most clearly perceived. In this context, Kubjikā, the energy of consciousness (*citkalā*), has two aspects. One is the energy of plenitude — the Full Moon (*pūrṇā*). The other is the energy of emptiness — the New Moon (*amā*):

"I praise (the goddess) called the Full (Moon) who resides at the end of the sixteen (digits of the moon) in the bright fortnight, whose form is (spherical like) that of a bud of the kadamba tree,[144] and nature that of nectar.

"I praise the goddess New Moon (*amā*) who resides in the centre (of the sphere of the Full Moon), she who is the lioness of the nectar of union (*utsaṅgāmṛtakesarī*), the original form (*bimba*) of (the goddess) Kālikā, and beautiful by virtue of her moonlight form (*candrikākāra*)." [145]

The New [146] and the Full Moon are the two extremities of the movement of vitality. The fullness empties out until, exhausted, it

[144] See the next section for Kubjikā's association with trees and vegetation.

[145] *kadambagolakākārāṁ ṣoḍaśānte vyavasthitām* ||
śuklapakṣe tv ahaṁ vande pūrṇākhyāmṛtarūpiṇīm |
tanmadhye kālikābimbaṁ utsaṅgāmṛtakesarīm ||
devīṁ amām ahaṁ vande candrikākārarūpiṇīm | (KuKh 3/121cd-3ab)

[146] Abhinava writes about this energy:

"Nectar (*amṛta*) in the form of the moon is divided into sixteen, then again into two. The other fifteen digits are drunk by all the gods. The energy of the New Moon (*amā*) hidden in the cave (of the Heart), is the remnant which fills and satisfies the universe. The fifteen digits of the moon empty themselves out in this way way one after the other. But this is not the case with the empty sixteenth (digit), which nourishes as does water and nectar." (TĀ 6/95-7)

reverts to its original potential condition which is the source of all energies. The light turns to darkness and the darkness turns to light as Kubjikā reveals her dark aspect and Kālī reveals her radiance. This cosmic cycle is repeated in the movement of the breath. When it takes place mindfully, in the manner about to be described, breathing becomes the epitome of time. Its ceaseless recurrence, which is life itself, mirrors within the creation and destruction of the world, replicating thus internally the fire sacrifice (the performance of which is coordinated with the phases of the moon) through which the world is created and which marks its end.

Accordingly, the Kubjikā Tantras, mindful of the importance of this process, teach several versions of it, one of which should be visualized in the following manner. The first stage engages the energy of the New Moon. It is the dark phase of progressive merger. The adept should sit and direct his attention down to the genital centre where he should visualize the rotating Wheel of Birth (*janmacakra*). In the middle of that moving wheel, the Wheel of the Drop rotates in an anticlockwise direction, the reverse of the original pure condition. Within that is the supreme energy of consciousness, Kubjikā, the Transmental (*manonmanī*). By contracting the anus, inhaling and then retaining the breath, this energy is raised up with, and through, the flow of vitality that travels up the central channel of vitality in the body called Suṣumnā.[147] Like a whirling wheel of fire, it enters first the navel and then the heart. Its movement beyond this station of expansion marks its progressive depletion as it assumes increasingly subtle forms of sound (*nāda*). Finally at the climax of

It is worth noting that Abhinavagupta in his extensive survey of the Tantras refers only to the energy of the new moon as the source of the other lunar energies. Perhaps the symbolic combination the two, namely, the emptiness of the new moon and the plenitude of the full moon is a connection that is made only in the Kubjikā Tantras. It is certainly not common, even though the symbolism of the energy of the New Moon (*amākalā*) is well known to many Tantric traditions and both new moon and full moon are usually considered to be particularly important times in Indian liturgical calendars.

[147] In the Upaniṣads this upward movement is described as one of the ways in which the vital breath can exit the body when a person dies. It is the best way, the only one which leads to immortality. The others lead to various forms of rebirth. The *Chāndogyopaniṣad* quotes an earlier authority as saying:

its ascent, it merges into the primary energy (*ādyaśakti*) of the sphere of Śiva's transcendental being (*śāmbhavamaṇḍala*). Thus, through this process, the residual traces of past action are burnt away.

Then follows the second phase, which involves the energy of the Full Moon. Just as the energy of the New Moon was elevated from below, this energy is 'elevated' from above. The *Tantra of the Churning Bhairava* describes this process as follows:

"(The adept) should elevate (the goddess) in the form of semen (*retas*) from the middle of the Drop, the Upper Place. The same (energy) that had previously waned away (now) rains down the nectar of the Full Moon (*pūrṇāmṛta*).

"There are a hundred and one channels of the heart.
One of these passes up to the crown of the head.
Going up by it, one goes to immortality.
The others are for departing in various directions."
(8/6/6. This same stanza recurs in *Kaṭhopaniṣad* 6/16. See also *Taitterīyopaniṣad* 1/6 and *Praśnopaniṣad* 3/7.)

Suṣumnā is mentioned by name, perhaps for the first time, in the following interesting passage in the *Maitryupaṇiṣad*. This is one of the earliest references to the Yogic process of leading the breath upwards through this channel:

"Now it has elsewhere been said: 'There is a channel called the Sushumnā, leading upwards conveying the breath, piercing through the palate. Through it, by joining (*yuj*) the breath, the syllable OṂ, and the mind, one may go aloft. By causing the tip of the tongue to turn back against the palate and by binding together (*saṁyojya*) the senses, one may, as greatness, perceive greatness.' Thence he goes to selflessness. Because of selflessness, one becomes a non-experiencer of pleasure and pain; he obtains the absolute unity (*kevalatva*). For thus it has been said:

After having first caused to stand still
The breath that has been retained, then,
Having crossed beyond the limited, with the unlimited
One may at last have union in the head."
(*Maitryupaṇiṣad* 6/21. Both these passages are Hume's translations.)

According to later descriptions of this process, the breath rises, taking the heat of the body up along with it (as happens when a person dies), in such a way that the central channel feels warm. Thus, *sūṣmā* — lit. She Who Is Pleasingly Warm — the alternative name for this channel, occasionally found in the early Kaula Tantras, gives us a clue to the meaning of the word *suṣumnā* as perceived by Kaula Tantrics.

"(The adept) should contemplate that crooked energy. Endless and tranquil (*saumyarūpā*) is the goddess) Ciñcinī (i.e. Kubjikā) who is the Supreme Power and the emanation (*sṛṣṭi*) (that occurs when) the withdrawal (of phenomenal existence) takes place.

"(In this state this energy is round and white) like a drop of milk. (Contemplating it in this form, the yogi) should lead it up to the end of the Nameless (*anāmānte*). Then the consecration takes place by that very (means whilst) the deity, in its original form, is brilliant as the full (moon), in the Wheel of the Heart, the place of the Full (Moon). Once (the adept) has thus contemplated (this energy), he should induce (her) to enter her own Wheel by means of the mind (*citta*).

"She who is praised (by all) and is supreme bliss, laughingly melts (*dravate*). She is the Nameless (*anāmā*), the energy which is consciousness (who resides) in the sphere of the Nameless (*anāmamaṇḍala*).

"(Thus the yogi experiences) the contentment (tṛpti) of the night of the Full Moon, which arises in this way laden with nectar. This is the consecration of the Command, the entry (*āgama*) (of the breath that takes place) in the phase of emanation.

"Once he has purified (himself) by (this process of) entry and exit (*gamāgama*), (the adept) should worship the Sequence (*kramārcana*)."[148]

Such yogic visualizations of the movement of the vital breath are an important part of the Kubjikā cult taught in the Kubjikā Tantras, where they are numerous and strikingly sophisticated, as is this example. Even so, Newar initiates do not generally undertake such complex visualizations, although the Tantras prescribe them, as in this example, as part of the preliminary purifications that precede the regu-

[148] *ūrdhvasthānād bindumadhyād retorūpāṁ samuddharet |*
upakṣīṇā tu yā pūrvaṁ sā pūrṇāmṛtavarṣiṇī ||
vakraśaktir anantātmā saumyarūpā vicintayet |
saṁhārasyāgame sṛṣṭiś ciñciṇī paramā kalā ||
ānayec ca anāmānte tu kṣīrakaṇikopamā |
tato 'bhiṣekas tenaiva prāksvarūpeṇa devatā ||
hṛccakre pūrṇasaṁsthāne pūrṇacandrasamaprabhā |
evaṁ saṁcintya cittena svacakre tu praveśayet ||
prahasantī parānandā dravate sābhinanditā |
citsvarūpātmikā śaktir anāmānāmamaṇḍale ||
tenāmṛtabharā tṛptiḥ paurṇamāsī pravartate |
āgamaṁ sṛṣṭibhedena etad ājñābhiṣecanam ||
gamāgamena saṁśodhya paścāt kuryāt kramārcanam | (KuKh 13/134-140ab)

lar Kaula rites (*kramārcana*). I have been informed, however, that Taleju Rājopādhyāyas do do so when they perform an extensive form of deposition of mantras on the body called *bṛhadnyāsa* (lit. 'Great Deposition'). As I have not had access to the liturgy that prescribes this deposition, I cannot supply precise details at present. Even so, it is clear that such elevated and internal practices are virtually the exclusive domain of only the most privileged Newar Brahmins. The reason these Brahmins advance for this is that they alone have access to the most powerful divine forms and rituals, and so need to prepare and protect themselves in additional ways not necessary for the average initiate for whom the usual, more external, ritual procedures are sufficient. But to an outside observer the feeling is irresistible that here we have yet another example of how these Brahmins have attempted to safeguard their spiritual and, hence, worldly prerogatives. Moreover, such manipulations of the original Tantric traditions in their favour along with the uniformly central position given to this one goddess, Kubjikā, who is their lineage deity, suggests that it was such people who set up the complex system we find today and that has been operating for several centuries.[149]

That major changes were brought about that greatly favoured them cannot be doubted. According to the legends in the Kubjikā Tantras, and indeed Tantras of this sort in general, the founding figures were renouncers, not householders. The legends describe them as living a peripatetic lifestyle, wandering from one sacred place to another, and encountering in these 'meeting grounds' (*melāpasthāna*) other accomplished adepts (*siddha*) and yoginīs. At times they would interrupt their pilgrimage to live in caves or under trees where, as the Tantras tell us, they would sit with their 'gaze averted upwards' until they were granted a visions of the goddess. This is a far cry indeed from the householder life of the Brahmin guru, his Kshatriya Karmācārya assistants and high-caste initiates![150]

[149] One of the aims of the present on-going research is to discover how far back this system has been operating and how it evolved. A more extensive examination of Newar Tantric liturgical works, especially early ones, will hopefully supply us with new data and shed light on the matter.

[150] Dumont writes: "Is it really too adventurous to say that the agent of development in Indian religion and speculation, the 'creator of values' has been the

The Tree Goddess

The root Tantra of the Kubjikā school, the *Kubjikāmata*, does refer to the goddess's assocation with trees, but in the later texts this association is extensively explored. The early Upaniṣads had already compared the body of a man to a tree with its root the Brahman.[151] Similarly, the maṇḍala of the goddess is the tree within which she resides and over which she presides in the form of a Yakṣiṇī, an ancient India folk deity of vegetation and the earth. The whole tradition and its teachings are represented as the Tree of Consciousness which grows out of the Divine Current (*divyogha*) of the Divine Kaula tradition. This Tree is supreme bliss, its best fruit is the tradition of the Siddhas (*siddhaugha*) and its branches include the places that are deposited in the body, the aggregate of letters, the Rudras, Siddhas, the various types of sacred places, the divine cave, the Abyss, the Sky, and the Skyfarer (*khecara*), each of which is divided into millions of aspects.[152] This tree is especially represented as a tamarind (*ciñca*) that grows on the Island of the Moon, the goddess's maṇḍala, from the middle of the triangle. Thus, in the later Kubjikā Tantras, where this imagery is elaborated, the goddess is frequently called the

renouncer? The Brahman as a scholar has mainly preserved, aggregated, and combined; he may well have created and developed special branches of knowledge. Not only the founding of sects and their maintenance, but the major ideas, the 'inventions' are due to the renouncer whose unique position gave him a sort of monopoly for putting everything in question." (Dumont 1980: 270, 275 quoted by Quigley 1993: 56)

[151] The *Bṛhadaraṇyakopaniṣad* declares:

"As a tree of the forest, just so, surely, is man. His hairs are leaves, his skin the outer bark. From his skin blood, sap from the bark, flows forth a stream as from the tree when struck. His pieces of flesh are under-layers of wood. The fibre is muscle-like strong. The bones are the wood within. The marrow is made resembling pith." (BṛH 3/9/28, Hume's translation)

[152] *divyaughaparamānandaṁ picuvaktraṁ tu kaulikam |*
tanmadhyoditacidvṛkṣaṁ mūlaśākhāsuvistaram || (CMSS 1/28).

"The Kaula Picu Face is the supreme bliss of the Divine Current. The Tree of Consciousness has risen from the middle of that and it has many roots and branches." (CMSS 1/28)

The form of this tree is described up to verse 36.

Lady of the Tamarind (Ciñciṇī or Ciñcā).[153] Under the shade of this tree, which is said to be the pure bliss present within all beings,[154] one attains the supreme liberating repose beyond pleasure and pain.[155] One of the founders of the Kubjikā cult was called Vṛkṣanātha ('the Lord of the Tree') because he achieved the perfect repose (*viśrāma*) of liberation under this tree when the goddess appeared to him. There, in the shade of the tree, she transmitted the enlightening Command (*ājñā*) which gave him the authority (*adhikāra*) that empowered him both to attain this realization and to transmit the teachings which lead others to it.

Another tree closely associated with Kubjikā is the *kadamba* tree. At times it is this tree, rather than the tamarind, that symbolizes the tradition and its growth from the Yoni of the goddess's empowering Command.[156] At times this tree is the maṇḍala itself rather than a development of it. To be precise, it is the maṇḍala that has been empowered by the Command of the goddess. The goddess thus fertilizes herself, as it were, to give birth to the cosmic tree. Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Bhagavadgītā* that he is the Aśvattha with its roots in heaven and its branches here below. Similarly, the maṇḍala empow-

[153] In one place this tree is said to be a *kiṁśuka* which, like the tamarind, has beautiful red flowers:

śaktitritayamadhye tu kiṁśukākāradevatā ||
piṇḍaṁ tasyā bhagākāraṁ vande trikoṇapīṭhagām |

"In the midst of the three energies is the deity whose form is that of a blossom of the kiṁśuka tree. The shape of her body is that of the vulva; I praise her who resides in the sacred seat of the Triangle." (KuKh 3/125cd - 126ab)

[154] *ānandaṁ vimalaṁ ciñcaṁ ...* |
ānandaṁ vyāpakaṁ deva sarvabhūteṣv avasthitam ||

"The tamarind is pure bliss.... O god, bliss is pervasive and is present in all beings." (KuKh 17/18abd)

[155] Referring to the tree which grows from the triangle of the maṇḍala, the CMSS (7/8cd) declares: "Supreme repose, devoid of pleasure and pain, is there" (*tatra viśrāntiparamaṁ sukhaduḥkhavivarjitam*).

[156] *saṁketaṁ vṛkṣamūlaṁ tu yonimadhye kadambakam* |
tena vyāptam idaṁ meruḥ ālayaṁ sarvayoginām ||

"The convention has as its root the tree which is the kadambaka in the centre of the Vulva. Meru, the abode of all yogis, is pervaded by it." (KuKh 17/30)

ered with mantra and the goddess's energy, is the Kadamba tree which, blazing with energy, emits its rays of mantric power down into the phenomenal world.[157] But she is not only the source of this tree, she is also born from it. She is the bud of the Kadamba flower. In this form she has engulfed into herself (*kadambīkṛta*) all the energies of the maṇḍala and the cosmic order that it represents. Thus she contains every potential for growth and unfoldment. When the flower blossoms, she is its radiant energy which, led to the heart (the centre of one's being where the Self resides), completes the cycle. The tradition is nurtured by it and the initiate, filled with light and the energy of the tree can, like the shaman on his shamanic quest, climb it to the summit of existence.

Conclusion

There are numerous other symbols associated with the goddess Kubjikā. They, like the rituals, sacred geographies, mantras, forms of Yoga (especially those linked with the movement of the vital breath) described in her Tantras, are surprisingly rich. The texts have developed in a highly creative period of the history of Tantrism and contain numerous traces of its development. All this would be more than enough to warrant extensive research of this goddess. But there is more. The application of precept to practice is in the case of this virtually unknown goddess also surprisingly extensive. To trace its ramifications we must seek to understand the whole complex network of Newar Tantrism and so, inevitably, a major part of Newar society and its history. This study will reveal, no doubt, how text and context penetrate each other, like Śiva and Śakti, to form a complete reality, internally ideal and externally concrete.

[157] *kṛtvā tritayasaṁyogaṁ kṣiptā ājñāntamaṇḍale* ||
raśmijvālākadambaṁ ca cintayec ca adhomukham |
navalakṣakṛte deva trailokyam api sādhayet ||
"Once having formed the conjunction of the three (energies) and thrown the Command into the maṇḍala, one should think (of it) as the Kadamba (tree) aflame with its rays facing downwards. O god, once one has (recited the Vidyā) 900,000 times, one controls even the three worlds." (KuKh 11/22cd - 23)

The Plates

Plate on page 3: Kubjikā.

This painting by Jñānakara Vajrācārya is based on the visualized form of the goddess Kubjikā described in the *Paścimajyeṣṭhāmnāyakarmārcanapaddhati*. This typical Newar liturgy represents the goddess in a form in which Newar initiates commonly visualize her. I have chosen this source accordingly. There are several variants, especially in the attributes she holds, of the corresponding form described in the Kubjikā Tantras. Seven variant visualizations are described in the *Manthānabhairavatantraṭīkā* by Rūpaśiva (fol. 9ff.). Others are found in the KuKh 29/33ff. and 49/25cd ff., KnT (fol. 11a ff.) and KRU 8/53 ff. In this case she holds in the right hands, from top to bottom, a trident, the mirror of Karma, a vajra, a goad, arrow and flat sacrificial knife. In the corresponding left hands she holds a severed head, ascetic's staff, bell, scriptures, a bow and a skull-bowl. She wears a lion and a tiger skin and a garland of human heads and is surrounded by a circle of stars (*tārāmaṇḍala*).

The *paddhati* says that she has a large belly and is bent (*kubjārūpā*). She is adorned with snakes. These features are emphasized in several descriptions of this form in the Tantras as well. They indicate that she is the snake goddess, Kuṇḍalinī. She is seated on a lotus that grows from Śiva's navel who lies prone below her on a throne (*siṁhāsana*). According to the Kubjikā Tantras, the navel is the place where she rests in the form of a coiled snake and from where she rises. The image therefore represents the goddess as Kuṇḍalinī emerging from the god as his divine will (*icchāśakti*).

Another interesting feature is the yellow colour of the front (*pūrva*) face. This is not the usual colour of this face according to the texts. A few learned Newar initiates affectionately refer to Kubjikā in Newari as *māsukvaḥ mājū* — the Yellow-Faced Mother. A large bronze mask representing this goddess is found in a temple close to that of Vajrayoginī in the vicinity of Śanku. The Newars associate the yellow colour of her face with Brahmāṇī, the first of the eight Mothers (*mātṛkā*). I suppose that this connection explains why the Durgā dancers of Bhaktapur receive their empowerment from Brahmāṇī (alias Kubjikā) in a ritual performed at her shrine just after the nine day Durgā festival held in autumn.

Plate 1: Two Siddhilakṣmī temples, Bhaktapur.

Plate 2: The Nyatapola temple dedicated to Siddhilakṣmī in Ta:mārhī square, Bhaktapur.

Plate 3: The three images in Nyatapola. Siddhilakṣmī is in the middle. To her left is Śmaśānabhairava and on her right Mahākāla.

Bhaktapur is unique insofar as it boasts three Siddhilakṣmī temples, all three of which originally contained stone images of the goddess. They were built by three successive Malla kings, who ruled between the middle of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth. This was a period when many of the most beautiful and important temples were built in all three of the cities of the Valley. The urge to build these temples by the Bhaktapur Mallas indicates a need to externalize the cult of their lineage deity to bring her powerful, beneficial presence into the public civic space. This urge was part of an overall resurgence of Tantrism throughout the Valley that is visibly evident by the flowering of the vast complex of iconic forms that adorn the temples of that period. This was also the time when the liturgies of Siddhilakṣmī, the goddess Taleju, that still govern the form of her secret rituals nowadays, were redacted by the *gurus* of the Mallas, the Taleju Rājopādhyāya Brahmins.

The first of these temples is in plain red brick with a tiled roof. It was built by Jagatprakāśamalla who ruled between 1643 and 1672 and is situated next to the palace. It contained a stone statue of the goddess that is now missing. His son, Jitāmitramalla, who reigned between 1673 and 1696, built the second temple. This is situated next to the temple built by his father (see plate 1). It is a small, grey-stone, *śikhara* type of temple decorated with multi-armed images of forms of the goddess Mahiṣāsuramardinī. She is the public representation of all the secret lineage goddesses and, therefore, also of Siddhilakṣmī. The image inside the temple is still in place. It is about one metre high and carved in black stone.

The third temple is Nyatapola, famous as the tallest temple in the Valley; Bhūpatīndramalla, the son of Jitāmitra, built it during the period of his reign, which lasted from 1696 to 1722. According to a well-known story, Bhūpatīndramalla had a dream in which he saw

the Bhairava who resides in the temple in Ta:mārhī square on a destructive rampage. When he awoke, he felt the presence of his lineage goddess who told him to build a temple to her in order to control Bhairava. Bhairava is the god of the lower castes, especially farmers, who made up, and still do, the majority of the population. It is hard to resist the feeling that in actual fact Bhūpatīndramalla was worried about unrest amongst his subjects whose growing influence was represented in his dream by the increased destructive power of their god. In a culture where magical Tantric action is felt to be more powerful than the outer use of force, Bhūpatīndramalla accordingly built his temple on six high plinths with five pagoda roofs so as to tower above the Bhairava temple to one side of it in Ta:mārhī square. Indeed, just the plinths are so high that the image of the goddess in the sanctum on the first story stands above its counterpart in the Bhairava temple. She is surrounded by small wooden carvings of the sixty-four yoginīs that are placed at the head and in between the supporting wooden pillars around the outside of the sanctum to intensify her female energy and channel it to the outside.

The iconography of the goddess further reinforces her dominance over the god. She stands on Bhairava who supports her with two of his four hands. He is Kālāgnirudra, the embodiment of the Fire of Time that consumes the worlds at the end of each cosmic cycle. In the bronze representation reproduced here (see plate 4), he looks up at the goddess and has two hands joined in an attitude of devotion. As Bhairava was the esoteric identity of the Malla kings, they were the intermediaries between the common people, who worshipped Bhairava, and the goddess who was the Malla's tutelary and hence that of the entire kingdom. The hierarchy of power is mirrored for the public to see in the increase by ten of the strength of the beings represented by pairs of statues positioned on both sides of the stairs, a pair for each plinth, leading up to the sanctum.

It seems that Jagatprakāśa and Jitāmitra were more liberal than Bhūpatīndra. The image in the temple built by the first of these three may well have been accessible to the public. Again, although the second temple is a closed one, parts of the image are visible through the wooden latticework of the doors. As for Nyatapola, the third temple, it is carefully sealed off from all those who are not specially

permitted to enter it. These are the Taleju Rājopādhyāya Brahmins and the Taleju Karmācāryas. The latter are the main priests of this temple who perform the daily obligatory rites. When more elaborate occasional rites require it, assistants aid them. One amongst them made a rough painting of the images inside the temple. On the basis of this painting Jñānakara Vajrācārya has made the ink drawing reproduced in plate 3, the first ever published of these images.

All three images are carved in black stone and are finely polished. The main image in the centre, of Siddhilakṣmī, is over two metres high. As the doors of the sanctum are considerably smaller than this image, it must have been lowered into it before the ceiling was built.

Siddhilakṣmī has nine heads and eighteen arms. She holds in the first seven of her right hands, from the uppermost down, a sword, trident, arrow, conch, mace, solar disc and vajra. She makes a fear-dispelling gesture with the eighth hand and, along with the ninth left hand, holds a jar (*kalaśa*). The corresponding hands on the left hold a skull-bowl, stick, bow, flower, wheel, lunar disc, bell, makes a boon-bestowing gesture and holds a jar.

She has two legs. One is extended and the other bent. She stands on two of the four hands of Kālāgnirudra who kneels on one knee below her. Kālāgni has four arms. The two that are not supporting the goddess hold, on the right, a trident and, on the left, a double-headed drum. He stands on a prostrate Vetāla who, looks up at him and holds a skull-bowl in one of his two hands.

To the right of Siddhilakṣmī is Mahākāla. He stands on a thousand-hooded snake that is supported by a lotus (not shown in this drawing). In his right hands he holds a sword, ascetic's staff (*khaṭvaṅga*), wide flat-headed knife (*kartṛkā*), snake and rosary. In the left hands he holds a stick, double-headed drum, skull-bowl, noose and trident. He wears a tiger skin and has four faces.

To the left of Siddhilakṣmī is Śmaśānabhairava. He is in the cremation ground. His left foot is extended and is supported by three devotees who are praying to him. A fourth devotee is kneeling on the other side of a burning funeral pyre into which all four are making offerings. Śmaśānabhairava's right leg is bent and is supported by a squatting Vetāla who holds a skull-bowl in one of his two hands. Below are four animals. From left to right of the god, they are a crow, dog, parrot and a fox.

Plate 4: Siddhilakṣmī

This plate is by courtesy of the National Museum, New Delhi. The bronze is described in Dawson (1999: 43) as "Svacchanda Bhairavī. Utpala, 10th century A.D. Chamba, Himachal Pradesh. Bronze, 37.0 x 24.0 x 7.0 cm. Acc. No. 64.102." Sanderson (1990: 63ff.) has established that this is actually an image of Siddhilakṣmī. I have been informed that a similar image made of eight metals (*aṣṭ adhātu*) is worshipped as the tutelary of the Malla kings in the chapel (*āgañ*) of the royal palace in Bhaktapur. The goddess in the bronze reproduced here is seated on Kālāgnirudra who supports her with two hands. His other two hands are joined at the palms in a gesture of prayer. Fire comes from his mouth as he looks up at the goddess in adoration who is looking at him. The goddess has five heads and ten arms. Her right hands hold, from top to bottom, a sword, a trident, a skull-staff and a skull-bowl. The fifth hand makes a fear dispelling gesture. In the corresponding left hands she holds a goad, a manuscript, a noose, makes a wish-granting gesture and holds a hatchet.

Plate 5: Guhyeśvarī

This form of Guhyeśvarī, painted by Jñānakara Vajrācārya, is described in the *Gorakṣasaṁhitā* (14/159-167) where she appears as the embodiment of Kubjikā's weapon (*astradūtī*). Newar initiates worship this form as the most secret aspect of Guhyeśvarī. The text describes her as dark blue with a large, heavy body. She wears a black garment and a garland of skulls. She has five faces and ten arms. In the right hands she holds, from top to bottom, a trident, mace, noose, goad and sword. In the corresponding left hands, she holds a skull-bowl, shield, arrow, severed head and pestle.

Plate 6: Tripurasundarī

This painting by Jñānakara Vajrācārya is a typical Newar representation of the goddess Tripurasundarī. This form is closely related to the goddess Kāmeśvarī. She sits on two layers of heads. The upper layer represents the gods of the five gross elements, called the Five Causes (*pañcakaraṇa*). They are, from left to right Brahmā, Viṣṇu,

Rudra, Īśvara and Sadāśiva. The lower set of heads represent the seven Mothers (*mātṛkā*). These are, from left to right, Brahmāṇī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, Cāmuṇḍā and Mahālakṣmī.

Tripurā is red, beautiful and well adorned. She has one head and four arms. The upper right hand holds a goad, the one below five arrows. The left hands hold a noose and a bow.



Plate 1



Plate 2

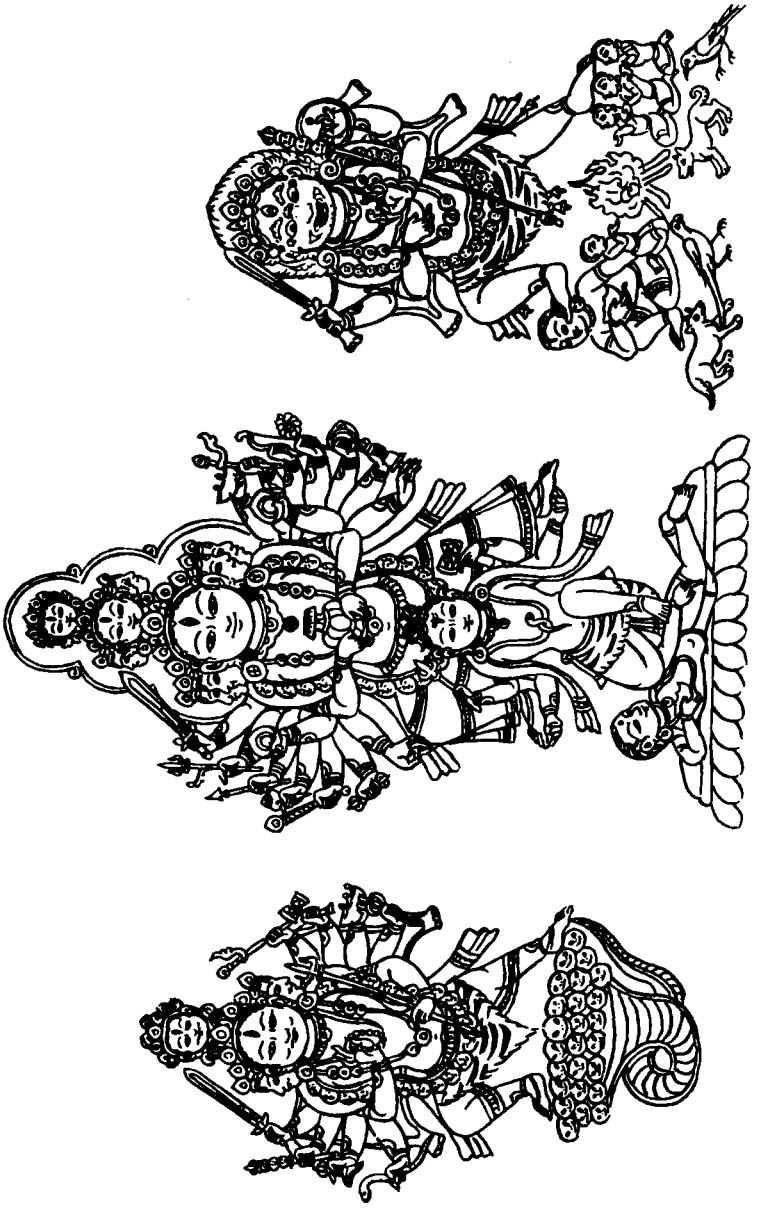


Plate 3



Plate 4

Plate 5

Plate 6

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